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THE PORTIA SERIES

CHATS WITH GIRLS

ON

SELF-CULTURE

BY

ELIZA CHESTER

AUTHOR OF "GIRLS AND WOMEN"

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CHATS WITH GIRLS ON SELF-CULTURE.

I.

WHAT IS SELF-CULTURE?

ONE summer morning, long ago, I sat in a pleasant schoolroom and listened while a group of fine young girls in fresh, white dresses read their graduating compositions. One of them, whose eyes were clear and whose voice was earnest, had chosen as her subject the words of Jean Paul, — "I have made of myself all that could be made of the stuff." I have forgotten her composition; but I think it must have been forcible, since after all these years I remember her dignity of bearing, and the impression of her motto has never been lost. It seems to me a worthy introduction to the subject of Self-Culture.

Self-Culture is the education which we give ourselves, or in other words, the culture of ourselves by ourselves. We have all kinds of material to work upon, and some of us have great help from others in our work, but we all have to do something. Even a princess, surrounded by

teachers from the moment she is born, cannot be cultivated without doing a part of the work.

The help of others ought to be a blessing to us, and it is so in the case of real help; but so much that is called help is not real, that those who are forced to rely on themselves often make the most complete men and women. Nevertheless the pronoun I is apt to have an unlovely character. Whoever is always saying, "I did it," "I made this of myself," etc., is not very attractive. Those who have no culture but self-culture are so in danger of being one-sided in their development, that it is necessary to sound a note of warning to them at the very beginning of this little book. It is certainly our duty to make all we can of the stuff. We can often do this modestly by following the advice of our parents and teachers; but when we are called upon to take counsel of ourselves alone, we have to concentrate our attention so much on ourselves that the result may be disastrous.

"Evelina's conversation is rather exhausting," said a lively young teacher. "On the train she explains the action of the engine, beginning with the fire under the boiler, and never stopping till the steam has passed off into space. Coming home from a concert she lets no one rest till she has pointed out all the visible constellations. At Plymouth the other day she insisted on relating the entire history of the Pilgrim Fathers, — that is, so far as she knows it; and she always uses French

when an English word would express her idea better. Of course it is beautiful that she is so devoted to her studies ! "

Now it happened that Evelina had had few home advantages. She had never known the principle of the steam-engine till she learned it in a book, and she was delighted to find she understood it. Her father and mother had never told her the story of the Pilgrim Fathers, and she naturally supposed it would be new to other people. As for French, she thought that only practice would make perfect, without realizing that such practice as hers would be likely to make her speech all the more imperfect. She was a well-disposed girl with a good mind. She would sometime be educated, so far as information goes, and perhaps after a time she would see that education is something more than information.

It is well to have knowledge at our command, but not always well to inflict it upon others, especially if it is of a kind they could easily acquire for themselves if they had the wish. I knew a teacher so determined to avoid pedantry that she made it a rule never to correct any mistake made by others outside the schoolroom. Indeed, she often indulged in little colloquial errors herself, saying she would rather be ungrammatical than disagreeable. I should not be surprised if she went too far.

For why should we not take pleasure in telling others the things we know? Is it not amiable to do so? It is amiable to tell them what they wish to know; it is even occasionally a duty to tell them what they do not wish to know; but it is never either amiable or a duty to tell anything simply to show that we know it. The self-educated are most in danger of doing this. The girls who learn from cultured mothers and fathers by sharing the atmosphere of culture are not so likely to "show off" their acquisitions as those to whom such acquisitions are less a matter of course.

Culture of ourselves is an even more important part of self-culture than culture by ourselves. We must be glad of all the advantages of home and school, of friends and society and travel, which come to us without our own effort, and then we must make the most of all these.

But why do we wish to cultivate ourselves? Perhaps many motives are at work in us. It may be that some girl who takes up this book is smarting with a sense of injustice. She feels that she is looked down upon by those who are not her superiors. She has heard that knowledge is power. She has no one to help her, but she wants to learn how to help herself that she may win her way to a higher position in life. Well, the motive is not altogether bad, and yet it is not a noble one. I hope that every such girl will win her way, but I hope that her

object in trying to cultivate herself will not be what is generally called success.

A great deal of self-culture comes from a desire to make an impression on others. This is especially so with women because in them approbativeness is large. But what an unworthy motive !

Some think of culture as a means of increasing the sources of happiness. This is right. We are happier when we have the full use of our powers. There is a never-failing glory and exhilaration in thinking new thoughts and discovering new truth which makes us happy in poverty, obscurity, neglect, and pain. Age does not dull the keenness of this pleasure. Young people are sometimes impatient because there is so much to learn, and the girls for whom I write may not realize that what I say is anything more than mere words ; but it is true that those who love the things of the intellect unselfishly find surprises of splendour waiting for them all along their pathway to the very end.

Sometimes the motive for self-culture is the hope of being of use to others. This is so lofty that I wish it were common ; but it is very rare.

I believe the true reason why we should wish to be all we may be is because the power to become so is put into our own hands. This is the little garden-plot which we have had given us to beautify. If we neglect it, there will always be one blot on the universe.

It would still be our privilege as well as our duty to "make the most of the stuff" if we were cast away on a solitary island and knew we were never more to see a human being. If we had any nobleness in us, we should still wish to keep our bodies clean and sweet; we should still wish to think and feel truly though we could no longer tell the truth; and to hold ourselves in the attitude of love though there was no one of our race to whom we could express our love. We could still love God and the humble creatures around us; but more than that, our hearts could go out to those we should never see. If it were not so, if we failed here, we should also fail when living in the world.

Self-culture is never wholly for ourselves. Intellectual and physical culture may in a selfish person end with the individual, though even this is seldom true; but moral culture cannot possibly end with self.

What is the end of self-culture?

Perhaps we may turn to our catechism for the answer, — "What is the chief end of man? To glorify God, and serve and enjoy Him forever." But this is a general though a sublime answer, and we must have definite aims if we wish to bring our daily life into harmony with our highest conceptions.

What kind of women do we wish to be?

A great deal depends on the answer to this question. I suppose that the girls who are most likely to read a

book on self-culture are those who have an intellectual bent. Their first thought — at least in reading such a book — is how they shall make the most of their minds. And yet how few of them, if they stop to think, would be satisfied to be simply intellectual women!

I remember a girl who had an insatiable thirst for knowledge and a mind of wonderful power. She had germs of a noble character. She was upright and just. Terrible trouble came to her when she was very young. She had a desperate struggle with poverty, and the whole care of a chronic invalid fell on her delicate shoulders. She did her duty faithfully; she fought her way through frightful obstacles; she gained a thorough education, and became at last a learned woman. On the day when the news of the taking of Richmond roused the whole country, an enthusiastic friend rushed in upon her with the cry, "The war is over! Lee has surrendered!" "Has he?" replied the young girl, indifferently; "well, I am more interested in this new Hebrew grammar than in the war!" There was so much that was heroic in her nature that she inspired respect; but it was always sad to see her, not only because her circumstances were so hard, but because she missed so many of the best things of life.

I heard not long ago of a fine young fellow who asked, "After all, why do we care so much for culture when it only separates us from our kind?" Certain forms of

culture do separate us from our kind; perhaps most of what is commonly called culture does this, but is that the culture we are striving for? I hope not.

Irma, the heroine of Auerbach's great novel, "On the Heights," writes in her journal: "That is the point why our modern culture cannot take the place of religion; religion makes all men equal; culture, unequal. There must, however, some day be a system of culture which will make all men equal; then only will it be the right and true. We are yet only at the beginning."

Shall I not describe to the girls who are to read this book the kind of woman I believe they wish to be?

They wish to be as strong and beautiful physically as is possible with the bodies which have been given them; they wish to be clear-sighted and intelligent; they wish for wide knowledge, — not to exhibit it, but to use it; they wish to make their accomplishments a means of expressing beauty in their every-day lives; to be refined in manner and still more refined in feeling; and, above all, to be sweet, fresh, truthful, modest, and — again, above all — large-hearted women.

It is not my province to say much of physical culture, but a girl who neglects it does so at her peril. Without it she will not only suffer bodily, but she can never be mentally or morally what she was meant to be.

Intellectually, it is best to lay broad foundations. I once heard of a young girl who studied Latin two weeks.

She said she just wanted to get an insight into it. I do not think she had a keen sense of humour. She was laughed at by other people; but I have sometimes wondered whether her study was necessarily in vain. If she fancied she knew anything of Latin, then she was superficial; but in two weeks an average scholar might easily learn something of the way Latin differs from English, and might in consequence look at many problems of language and literature, and even of history, more wisely.

A slight knowledge of a subject is not always a superficial knowledge. A lady who was a botanist spent an afternoon in explaining to a friend something of the structure of mosses, showing her especially how the whole kingdom of these exquisite little plants is dominated by the plan of four. "Oh," cried the enthusiastic listener, "I feel as if I had had a glimpse into a new world!" One afternoon could not make the student a botanist, but it could give her large thoughts about plants.

I once heard a young girl give a reason for wishing to graduate from a good school, though she was poor, and sacrifices were required to keep her there for the last few months. "I know well enough," she said, "that another term in school will not 'complete my education;' but I have always thought I should like to take a full course of study and know a little of all the subjects which the older and wiser people who planned

the course considered a necessary foundation for an education."

This careful laying of a symmetrical foundation is not like the feverish rushing from one thing to another which characterizes so many girls. "I am too busy to go to see you," said a friend on the street not long ago. "It is because I have my living to earn, and not because I am tearing round like mad after culture, like everybody else in Boston."

And now, how can we cultivate ourselves? It is the purpose of the following pages to make some practical suggestions in answer to this question. It is not my intention to present an exhaustive plan of self-culture, yet I have wished the outline of this little book to be somewhat comprehensive, because I feel that a one-sided development is an injury to any one. I think that the cultivation of the physical, the mental, and the moral natures should go hand in hand. There are some principles of growth which may be applied equally to all these three cases, others which can be best understood by studying them in connection with some special form of culture.

In this preliminary chapter I will speak of things essential to any self-culture, whether of the body, the mind, or the heart.

A wise normal-school principal was accustomed to begin his instructions to his pupils by telling them that

the first requisite in getting an education was to be teachable. Nobody can help a scholar whose attitude is that of self-sufficiency. No one learns from even the best teacher without being willing to learn. Any instructor will tell you that when a class is made up of indifferent scholars, it is impossible for him to treat the subject of the lesson in the most interesting way, no matter how conscientiously he may try. On the other hand, there are pupils so full of eagerness to be taught that even a commonplace teacher feels a glow of inspiration with them, and thinks of a thousand new illustrations to make the subject clear. "I always enjoy any class when Miss Frost is in it," said a teacher. "She is not brilliant, but she is so interested in all I say, that I feel like saying the best things." I have heard of a lady who loved poetry who would never teach literature to her pupils because they were so unappreciative that she said she felt as if it would desecrate any poem to mention it to them. No doubt she was partly to blame herself, but you see how each one may be in a measure responsible for what others give to her.

Even if a teacher's ardour were not influenced at all by the carelessness of the listeners, yet no one will learn who is not willing to be taught. If we think that we know already everything worth knowing, we are not likely to add much to our knowledge. If we approach the very humblest of our teachers in a spirit of criticism,

we do not get from such an one even the little which might be given us.

Some one may fancy that teachableness is not necessary in self-culture; but it is more important for those who must work much alone than for others who have pastors and masters appointed them, because those who have few to help them are most in danger of relying on their own narrow view of a subject. No one is so unfortunate as to be entirely without teachers. At the very worst we can still turn to books with a teachable spirit. But as a matter of fact, any one who is teachable can usually find a teacher, though not always in the formal sense of the word. For instance, an ill-educated young girl thinks she would like to speak better English, but she cannot go to school. Now, she probably knows some one who speaks well. Perhaps it is her rector, or her employer, or even some companion. If she chooses to pay attention to this friend's manner of speech, she is sure to improve, though the friend may be quite unconscious of giving any help. Suppose she would like to know something of literature, but cannot buy books. She is undoubtedly acquainted with somebody who would be glad to lend her a volume of Shakspeare, and until she has learned that by heart, she need not be troubled by her narrow surroundings.

Most of us, however, are not reduced to such extremities. We have a wealth of opportunity to choose from;

and it must never be forgotten that those who have every advantage that money can buy, and all the cultivated friends and teachers who work directly and indirectly in their behalf, still have the duty of self-culture laid upon them even more imperatively than their less fortunate fellow-creatures. The young girl who sits through a classical concert with the utmost propriety, but who spends her time in examining the bonnets of her neighbours, or in thinking over the last party, gets no culture from the music, though she may be able to discuss the performers, and say that the soprano had a voice like a steam-whistle, and that the piano was out of tune. A poorer girl who could not go to the concert may envy her, and wish that she too were a connoisseur, but that is simply because she does not know what she is envying. Unless we use our opportunities, we have not the spirit of culture, and any true growth is impossible.

Teachableness, however, is not the only quality essential to self-culture. We must know how to choose our teachers. That means that we must be self-reliant, — and for a moment some one may think that this spirit is exactly opposed to teachableness; but self-reliance is not self-sufficiency.

We are not all capable of choosing the best teachers. A little child, for example, has not much judgment. Some of us never can depend on our own judgment. It

is right that we should be modest. If we have good reason to think that one of our friends is wiser than we are, we must take counsel of that friend. Nevertheless, if we cannot choose our teachers well, it may sometimes be a positive disadvantage to us to be teachable. To illustrate: there was once a young girl with a great musical endowment. She lived in a village where there was little musical culture. She took some lessons of an agreeable young lady who was considered the best musician in the place. By and by she found her voice failing unaccountably. She decided to go away to a distant city and study with a distinguished master. The master told her that all she had hitherto learned was a hindrance rather than a help to her, for her teacher had not understood the need of correct breathing, and she had formed bad habits. The young girl went to work with a will to overcome her faults; but after she had been struggling a long time, her master told her one day very gently that he had never had a pupil whose faults were so ingrained, and who would require so much time to eradicate them. "If you had not been so determined to do your best, and to follow your teacher's directions exactly," he said, "you would never have learned these false ways so thoroughly!" Then they both laughed, but the pupil could not help crying at the same time. "Suppose I should be making the same kind of a mistake again?" she said roguishly. "Sure enough," said the master.

"Well, think the matter over, and see if you can't decide for yourself whether to follow my directions." She thought for a while and then said, "When I was at home, I always felt tired after a lesson, and I grew more and more tired as time went on; but with you I find it is easier and easier to use my voice. So I think I shall risk doing exactly as you tell me."

Every one of us must love the girl better for her faith in her first teacher and her zeal in obeying her. She certainly gained in moral culture by her docility, for she had chosen the teacher she believed to be best. Still her want of discrimination had involved a great loss musically. In this case it was inevitable. No one could expect a young girl under the circumstances to do better.

I have before said that we could not get the best which even the humblest could give us by approaching the teacher in a spirit of criticism; and yet we must exercise some criticism or we shall always be following blind guides. How can we reconcile these two facts? It seems to me we must choose the teacher we believe to be best and then give him a fair chance. If he tries to explain something to us, let us try to understand, instead of wondering if some one else could not do better. When he has done all he can, and we have done all we can, and still we have not mastered the difficulty, we must seek for another teacher. We must, however, be modest enough to acknowledge that the fault may be in us.

Yet it may be in the teacher. Perhaps you may say that this was substantially what our little singer did, and that she suffered in consequence. That is true. It is not given to most of us to learn our lessons without suffering. But her docility proved a gain in the end. For though it took her so long to conquer her faults that many a fellow-student less highly endowed outstripped her at first, yet her habit of persevering work enabled her to overcome at last; and then this same habit gave her the power to learn true methods of singing with the same thoroughness, so in the end she did make of her superb voice "all that could be made of the stuff." A friend of hers who took life very easily, and who practised or not according to the mood, seemed for some years to be a much more successful musician; but her careless habits always went with her, and she never became really great.

We do want the best teachers in everything. It is a very delicate matter to know how to choose them; but the first essential is to desire the best. Our power of choosing is the measure of the degree of culture we have reached. Of course those of us who have had few advantages will make a great many mistakes; but there is one direction in which we need not make mistakes. We always win a moral victory when we try to do the best, even if we are mistaken in what we do.

There must be many girls who have already realized that in every effort to nourish the moral nature there is

unbounded help from an unseen power. There must be many who are surprised to find so much help when their own efforts are so weak and few. If there are some who do not yet know this truth from their own experience, I cannot prove it to them. But we can all prove it to ourselves, by making such an effort; for then we always touch a chord which vibrates through the whole universe. The help waiting for us is so mighty that our feeblest aspiration is never without a response.

II.

A WORD ABOUT THE BODY.

THE girls who are willing to read a volume on Self-culture are the very ones most likely to need bodily culture. Yet I shall not say much about it here, partly because other volumes of this series deal with it more fully, and partly because special training is often needed to counteract special defects, and this calls for a physician or a gymnast.

I cannot omit the subject altogether, however, for it is of vital importance; at least, it is necessary to be well. Moral culture, it is true, is possible, though difficult, for the most helpless invalid; but intellectual labour demands a sound body. A girl who knows she is injuring her health by study must be willing to restrain her ardour; if not, she will become a burden to herself and to everybody else, to say nothing of the fact that she will not even accomplish her object. It would be a good plan, however, for her to make sure that it is work which is hurting her. I do not think young people often over-study; but many school-girls are careless

about taking proper food or exercise or fresh air; and many more ruin their health by parties and late hours; while there is, alas! a large class who study selfishly, from ambition alone, who worry so much over their lessons that every one takes it for granted that the lessons themselves are injurious. If you study with the true aim of making "the most of the stuff," it is easy to be serene, even when the stuff proves cotton instead of silk; or, to drop the metaphor, when you find that your faithful efforts still leave you at the foot of your class. If you mean to make the most of yourself, it will be easy, too, to give the body its due share of attention.

Those of us who are born invalids must bear our cross patiently, but those of us who begin life well are usually to blame if we do not continue to be well.

I must insert a word here for the sake of the poor girls who have but a limited time to study, and who believe that if in that time they fail to gain a diploma, or to set some other definite seal upon their work, it may change their whole course of life. Their temptation is great. With care in other directions, they may be able to study as much as they hope to do; but if not, still it will not do to give up health. It would be better to work in a factory all one's days with a healthy body, and the sunny spirit which is apt to accompany it, with a love for books and a determination to make the most of spare minutes, than to take honours at college,

and then, breaking down, to become a querulous invalid for the rest of one's days, — though I do not mean that I look on a factory life as either agreeable or healthful in itself.

As most of us cannot be even well without care, the preservation of health certainly forms a part of the subject of physical culture; but from culture, in its strict sense, we always hope for improvement. Can we improve our bodies, or must we accept them exactly as they are given to us? I am inclined to think the body can be improved. The great trouble is, that after we reach full maturity physical change is almost impossible; and where are the old heads on very young shoulders necessary if there is to be any improvement in early youth? Luckily, there are often parents and teachers at hand to guide, and docility is a virtue generally admitted to be a peculiar ornament of a young girl.

Moreover, some change is possible even for older people; probably more than we think, if we only had the heart to try for it. For instance, statistics show that the brain measurements of the uneducated do not increase after the age of twenty-one, yet they do so perceptibly among college students. If exercise can affect the brain, why not other parts of the body?

I know a child of five years who has some symptoms of lung disease. She already takes an intelligent interest in daily practising light gymnastics for the expansion of

the chest, and in breathing long draughts of fresh air. She may not conquer her constitutional tendency, but I think she will. There is little doubt, so physicians are beginning to say, that many an older person who is believed to be doomed to consumption might ward off the terrible disease by proper breathing and a carefully regulated diet.

Those of us who have studied the rudiments of physiology know in a general way that we must keep the digestive organs in good order by food of the right kind and amount; that we shall thus be supplied with good blood, provided we always breathe enough pure air; and that plenty of exercise will keep our muscles vigorous. But most of us have some weakness in our constitution, and we always count on that to interfere with all our plans. We need to find out our particular defect, and try to cure it. Sometimes we can do that for ourselves. I know a man of splendid physique who was a narrow-chested boy. He says that he brought about the change by simply throwing his shoulders back slowly and forcibly a few times every day for several years.

Our defect, however, is often of such a nature that we need help to cure it; probably the services of a physician are seldom required. The gymnasium would often be sufficient if the teacher could make an individual study of each case. Just what can be done, I must not venture to say; but certainly it is not our duty to be

resigned to any flaw in our body until we have faithfully tried to mend it.

Manual training is fast becoming a part of regular school discipline; and those of us who must train ourselves should remember that if we would be of use in the world, we need useful hands, and that if we wish to help in making the world beautiful we must have accurate hands. It is hard to teach ourselves, but we can demand nice and complete work of ourselves in whatever we do, even if we simply have beds to make or dishes to wash. I was pained not long ago to see a young girl who had a genuine love of beautiful pictures turning over the leaves of a fine book of photographs with such careless hands that I trembled for the corners. I think the rich are even more careless than the poor in such ways; but as they replace their soiled and battered treasures more frequently with something new, their faults are less perceptible.

III.

HOW SHALL WE LEARN TO OBSERVE?

"MY girls are going abroad this summer," said a gentleman. "Martha will see everything, and Mary will see only what she goes to see; but then, Mary will know best what she wants to see."

The world over we find this distinction between the natural observers and the natural thinkers. When the two are combined we have genius.

To the girls who see everything I have only a few words to say at this point: —

1. Take pains to look at the things worth seeing.

2. Take time to think about what you see.

Let me illustrate these rules by the case of two girls who both had remarkable powers of observation. They were visiting a friend who invited them to take a drive. One of them suggested that they should go to a historic spot in the vicinity which she had read about. The other stipulated that they should drive through the principal streets of the city on their way. In the evening, while talking over their drive, the latter electrified every-

body by appearing to know who lived in every house they had passed. She had observed the door-plates and had asked questions. She remembered who lived in the brick houses with bay windows and in the stone mansions with porticos. She remembered the monument they had visited, too; but her interest in it was languid, and her ideas of the event it celebrated confused.

The other guest remembered the houses equally well, but she had not noticed whether Mr. Smith or Mr. Jones lived in some commonplace structure. On the other hand, she knew the historic ground inch by inch, and slipping away to the library, went over the narrative again while the details were fresh in her mind.

Both these girls had the faculty of seeing everything. One of them used it as a means of culture and the other did not. Most persons, even among those who are considered observing, see only certain things.

I once heard a city boy say, "There is nothing to see in the country." A country boy of about the same age confided to me his opinion that there was nothing to see in the city.

A gentleman and lady, both enjoying Nature, were driving through the woods one day when the gentleman said, "What an eye you have for flowers! I have n't seen one of those you have mentioned for the last half-hour!" The lady laughed. "What an eye you have

for rabbits and other 'small deer'!" she said. "I have n't seen one this whole afternoon."

So it will be clear that unless we have some definite training in observation, we shall not see half we should like to see.

How can we learn to observe?

I remember the heroine of a novel who describes her own education. She was sent out every day to take a walk, and when she came in she was expected to describe fully and accurately everything she had seen. Such practice is good, and within the reach of everybody. Even a solitary individual can think over what she has seen, and if she finds the mental picture misty, she can go to the same place again and observe more carefully. Still, I am so great an enemy to the waste of any force that I should not think it worth while to spend strength in trying to observe everything; I should rather look at things which would bear some fruit in thought.

Any science studied in a rational way is a positive help to one who is learning to observe. Those girls who can have teachers, and who are aware of being unobservant, should study at least one science faithfully with a good instructor. But as I am writing especially for those to whom self-culture means culture by themselves as well as of themselves, I will describe a few methods of working.

The sciences most accessible to those who must study alone are, I think, botany and mineralogy.

I knew a young lady living in the country who wished to understand botany, but who had no teacher. She bought Gray's "Lessons in Botany," — a small book, clearly written, — and thoroughly mastered it. She verified everything so far as she could: she planted beans and watched their growth; she looked at the shrubs about the garden to see whether they multiplied by suckers or stolons; she noticed how seed-pods were formed, and found out for herself the difference between a blackberry and a strawberry. She gathered leaves and compared their shapes with those described by Gray, and soon learned the technical names.

By the time she had finished the book she had formed the habit of seeing a thousand details of vegetable life which had formerly escaped her, though she was observing. Then she took Gray's "Manual of Botany." This is a large volume full of scientific descriptions which are so apt to daunt the beginner that perhaps most girls could do better with the "Field and Garden Botany" of the same author, though this is much less complete. Our student worked with the artificial key; and beginning with a few common flowers whose English name she knew, and tracing them till she found their Latin synonyms and saw how they were related to other species, she finally learned how to classify and name any unknown flower she might encounter. She soon became an expert in this fascinating work. Of course she made blunders.

Of course she found words she did not understand; but she looked for these faithfully in the glossary, and as she had to apply her definition on the spot to the flower in hand, she learned it practically, and seldom had to look for the same word twice. It was a pleasure to find out the name of a flower; but it was something more than that, for the necessity of examining every part to make sure that the specimen agreed with the description brought out many a beautiful feature which would otherwise have been unsuspected. In short, our young friend learned to observe.

A lady who has a world-wide reputation for what she has accomplished in science said to me once, "Oh, I studied botany in the old-fashioned way, — analyzed and pressed three hundred flowers! You know we do not consider that botany at all now. Nevertheless some of that old-fashioned study is a very necessary foundation for real scientific work."

It has always seemed to me that we should learn to use our eyes well before we spent much time over a microscope, though that is an instrument which endows us with a new sense. I have always thought, too, that we must learn to know something of individual flowers before we could get much real mental nourishment from the delightful effort to comprehend their relationships or from our guesses at the history of their development. I hope, indeed, that every girl who

decides to learn a little botany for herself will by and by own a fine microscope, and that some time she may study the science philosophically; but at first I think the outline I have indicated will be enough for her, and it will be impossible for her to follow it without learning to observe some things. She will see more and more. At last she will probably seem to her companions to have what an old professor of botany used to call the "top eye," because she will see so much that they miss.

The field is inexhaustible. I knew a lady who had taught botany for some years — and had taught it well — who once spent a few weeks of leisure at home, and in the time found one hundred and eighty species of plants before unknown to her in her father's own small field and orchard!

Hugh Miller is the most illustrious example of a self-taught geologist. He was a stone-cutter, poor, and knowing no one who could teach him. He made a collection of all the different kinds of minerals he found in the course of his stone-cutting, and being ignorant of their names, he labelled them 1, 2, 3, etc. He examined and compared them till he knew their properties perfectly; and when several years later he was able to buy a book on mineralogy, all the numbers fell into place as by magic, — he had nothing to do but to substitute the names quartz, feldspar, tourmaline, etc., for the numbers he had

used so long. He had real genius, and was capable of seeing for himself some of the laws which govern facts; but even a simple girl who wished to know about minerals could learn something by following his plan.

It is easier, however, to get help now than it was in his day. Some one who was about to spend ten cents for a Christmas card to send to a friend remembered that this friend was interested in looking at stone-walls, and mailed to her instead a little pamphlet on mineralogy by Mrs. Richards of the Boston Institute of Technology. The young girl receiving it saw that its brief pages were full of instruction for her. She showed it to two or three other girls of similar tastes, and they formed a little club for studying mineralogy with specimens. As they went on, they bought a few larger books, — Dana, Brush, etc., — and they soon became better mineralogists than most girls who study the subject in school. They learned to see everything about their own homes. As the analysis of minerals by Dana's or Brush's method required more knowledge of chemistry than they had, they contented themselves with Crosby's little book of "Tables," which deals chiefly with simple physical tests. They also studied rock-structures with the aid of another little book of Professor Crosby, "Science Guide No. 12," published by the Boston Natural History Society. The volume costs forty cents, and a hundred typical minerals which illustrate it two dollars more. I give these details,

thinking that some other girl may like to follow their example. I should not of course wish to have any one think that I suppose it is necessary to study exactly in this way to develop one's powers of observation; but this is one way that has been tested, and so it may prove to be a help to somebody.

I have known several girls who learned something of ornithology, and increased their observing faculty greatly, by simply walking in the fields and woods and listening to the birds. At first the vocal concert seemed bewildering; then they began to distinguish the different performers; then they would be fortunate enough to see one of the singers; and by this time they would be ready to concentrate their attention so that they could give a fair description of the bird. Now all that was wanting was the name. Perhaps they could not find that out for a long time, though one who has access either to a good museum or to illustrated books on ornithology need have little difficulty. None of these girls were very scientific. They did not know which way the arch of the aorta turned in passing from the heart of a bird, — though that is a matter of real interest, — nor even the relation of the two stomachs; but they had learned to observe, and the world was fuller to them in consequence.

Modern teachers of botany and zoölogy insist not only on the study of the objects themselves, but that the pupil should endeavour to draw what he sees. "You

must observe to draw," says one of them. And that is true, — not only in scientific studies, but in every department. Even if we do not know how to draw according to any rule, the attempt to reproduce what we see always helps us to see, and so drawing must be a branch particularly recommended to those who wish to improve their powers of observation. This kind of drawing is possible without a teacher, though of course it is better to have instruction.

One of Mrs. Whitney's heroines, speaking of a visit to Italy, says that her crude attempts to copy some of the Madonnas were worth everything to her, because she saw so much more in the picture in consequence.

All art study affords training in observation, and particularly in observation of the beautiful, so that it is of the highest value. We want to learn what to see quite as much as how to see. I remember visiting once the exhibition-room of a much-praised artist, and being struck by the vitality of the pictures. Every motion and attitude of the figures expressed life. I asked an acquaintance, who was a good judge of pictures, how he liked the exhibition. "It is wonderful!" he said, "but I do not care for it, because the artist seems to have no perception of beauty." I felt that the criticism was just, and it seemed almost a pity that such powers of observation and expression should be spent on inferior objects. Now, a girl working by herself cannot become an artist,

but I think any one can learn to look at the world with something of an artist's eye simply by daily selecting the most beautiful point within one's horizon, and trying to remember it perfectly with the eyes shut. In the same way we may learn to know pictures accurately.

As the senses furnish the avenue to convey impressions of the outside world to us, they must be cared for. We must not strain our eyes, lest they fail us, nor may we allow ourselves to take cold lest our ears should grow dull. More than this, we must cultivate our senses.

I once knew a young girl whose senses were of little use to her. They were apparently perfect as bodily organs, but they did not seem to belong to her. She was always busy thinking. While taking a walk she would reflect upon the fall of the Roman Empire or the rise of the Dutch Republic. She believed in fresh air, but was often unconscious of ill odours. She had a good appetite, but could not tell when her food was well cooked.

This young girl had a strong desire for all kinds of knowledge. She studied botany and geology and ornithology. By and by she became a delightful out-door companion. She saw the tiniest flowers hidden in long grass. She knew the colouring and the structure of every stone in the wall. "Without a gun," she had named "all the birds" by their songs. Yet she was as stupid

as ever in a city street. She never could tell what fashions the ladies were wearing, she never noticed the shop windows, and she was always losing her way. All of us who are not absolute dunces can "see what we go to see," and her training in the sciences had simply enlarged the circle of things that she looked at intentionally. She had trained her eyes and ears to report more readily to the brain than formerly. I do not know that the organs themselves had changed.

After this it fell to her lot to keep house for a while. "I pity her husband," said her sister, "for she will never know when the bread is sour." Strange to say, however, she set an excellent table. It was one of her principles that everybody should have wholesome food. It had never before been her responsibility to provide it. Now that it was so, she turned her attention to what she ate, and soon discovered the difference between good food and bad. She was accustomed to say that it seemed as if new papillæ had come into being on the surface of her tongue, because it was now easy for her to detect tastes which once it was impossible to distinguish even when she concentrated all her energies on the task. Perhaps some physiologist will tell us whether she was right.

It was on account of the same application of principle to life that she learned to put to rout all bad smells that invaded her house. "A housekeeper should cultivate

her nose as she does her character," says a friend. Our heroine did this, and achieved success. "But in other people's houses, where I can cast off care," she would remark, "I am as unconscious as ever when anything is wrong."

We say that the power to enjoy involves an equal power to suffer, which is probably true; but it does not follow that those who enjoy most must actually suffer most. I know a woman keenly alive to the fragrance of flowers who says she is seldom troubled by evil odours. "I always put myself out of the path of every breeze that is laden with foulness," she says, "while I always turn toward the 'south wind that comes o'er gardens;' so I get all the pleasure, and little of the pain, that comes from an acute sense." But perhaps the sense organules of the nose which take note of bad odours are not the same as those which perceive pleasant ones. At all events, the keenest scented dogs seem incapable of noticing beautiful perfumes. So it may not even be true that in increasing our power to enjoy we increase our power to suffer. By diligently cultivating agreeable sensations, it may be we render ourselves callous to disagreeable ones.

What is a musical ear? Many persons of quick hearing cannot distinguish musical tones with certainty. Physiologists suggest that of the thousands of little hairs which line the interior of the ear, each may vibrate to

some one tone, while it is probable that the musical notes are appreciated in but one division of the ear. Very likely this part of the ear is furnished with fewer hairs in the case of unmusical people than with others. How is it then that by attention to good music, by always hearing it and practising it, so many people do really learn to distinguish tones? Can there possibly be a change in the ear itself? No doubt the best explanation is that the brain learns how to receive the impressions on the tympanum. There is the same question in regard to discriminating tints in colour. It is pretty well proved that the cultivated eye has a different sense-lining from the uncultivated one. And Tyndall tells us that each generation adds something to the organ itself.

We also learn from the scientists that there are incipient senses. These seem to be developed by cultivation. I do not know that the power of finding one's way can be called a special sense, yet the difference between people would almost make us believe it. This would be a sense of such practical value that it is worth some pains to cultivate it. Most of us try to make up for our deficiencies in this respect by tracing our way upon maps, and that does help us. Others say it is all a matter of observation, and that one could learn to do as well as another. I have always wondered if some persons were not born with a correct idea of the

points of the compass, for after all everything depends on our ability to turn in the right direction. I have a theory that the powers of the stupid might be improved by carrying a pocket-compass. Of course all improvement is easiest for the young, and if any girl who reads these words is aware that she has no organ of "locality," I really wish she would try the following experiment for a year. First, let her fix the points of the compass in her own home; then whenever she goes away from it, even for a short walk, let her see if she still has them in her mind, by comparing her idea of them with the compass itself. It could not do her any harm, and would probably do some good; she might not create a new sense, but she certainly would become more observing.

The line between the sense itself and the power of observation is hard to draw. I knew a young lady who became partially deaf, but it was a long time before any one but her aurist knew it, for she was so clever and quick-witted that she watched others, and learned from their motions and expression what they said. An oculist said to a friend the other day, "Ah, you do not tell me the truth! You cannot really read at that distance; you are one of those who read with the will and not with the eyes." She was surprised, but when suitable glasses were fitted to her she found he was right.

So something more than the senses or than observation must always be allowed for in what we see and hear, taste, smell, and touch. There is a certain moral element in observation. Let us decide henceforth to see not only what we go to see, but what we ought to see.

Acting on this principle, girls would oftener see when their mothers look tired, or when they are in their brothers' way. I once knew a quiet girl who never seemed to be observing anything, yet when a chair was needed she was always ready to set it in place; she always opened the door when any one whose hands were full wished to pass; and in a crowded room she could find for herself the corner where she was least likely to be a stumbling-block for others. Perhaps she could not have told you what everybody wore, but I think she understood the true uses of the observing faculty.

IV.

HOW SHALL WE LEARN TO REMEMBER?

FEW in these days are inclined to glorify the memory at the expense of the other mental faculties. I heard a lady say not long ago, in reference to a young girl who had come into her school with extravagant recommendations from former teachers, "She has ability; that is, she can learn by the yard, but I doubt whether she has real intellect." The capacity to learn by the yard, however, is not to be despised, if it is not allowed to overshadow more important powers. For instance, we might choose to have good judgment rather than a good memory. Nevertheless, if we could not remember the facts we were to judge, our judicial powers, admirable as they might be, would prove rather unfruitful. Memory should have its own honourable place in our mental equipment. It converts our various observations into available knowledge, ready to be acted upon by the judgment. First, we must see clearly, then we must remember accurately, then we must judge truly.

Some of us may be able to remember all kinds of things without difficulty, but most of us are not so endowed; and therefore, since we must concentrate our efforts on learning a few of the many things we should like to know, it is well to consider what we most wish to retain before we make plans how to accomplish our object.

First, we want to remember whatever it is our duty to remember.

As our duties differ, I will not say much in detail on this head. I have heard of a lady so engrossed in study that she forgot to see that dinner was provided for the family; I have no doubt she enjoyed some sublime thoughts meantime, but they could not have really elevated her character. Girls sometimes forget to feed their pets; they often forget little commissions given them by their mothers; they forget to take the right books to school; they forget where their lessons are, and a hundred things which inconvenience other persons as well as themselves. It is certainly a schoolgirl's duty to know her lessons, even when she sees no particular advantage in them, and although it is true that teachers sometimes give absurd lessons. I suppose we all know, in a general way, what our special duties are, and can apply the formula for ourselves.

Sometimes we say we cannot remember the things we ought. I have been told that Dr. James Freeman

Clarke once preached a sermon on this subject. He said we could remember whatever we felt a deep interest in remembering. During the following week he discovered one day that he had entirely forgotten something which caused him great personal loss and annoyance, — something which he had a deep interest in remembering. The next Sunday when he entered the pulpit, he took occasion, with his usual candour, to mention the circumstance, and to retract all he had said the Sunday before. Nevertheless it is true that the things we most want to remember are those which it is our duty to remember.

Second, we want to remember whatever will add to the happiness of others. This is perhaps a branch of our first proposition; yet I emphasize it, because there are so many small acts not strictly our duty which we could do every day, and which we should be glad to do if we could only think of them. These are the

"Little nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love,"

— "unremembered," that is, after they are done. The quality we call "thoughtfulness for others," which lends a special charm to the character of some young girls, is greatly due to this fine use of memory.

In these two directions we want to remember certain definite things, and we are justified in resorting to the most artificial means for the purpose. If I have prom-

ised to lend you a book, it is quite right for me to remind myself of it by changing a ring to another finger. Much more would this be right if I had reason to suppose I should forget to return a book I had borrowed.

We might perhaps use artificial means to remember anything which would add to our own happiness, though here we are less likely to forget. Still, I once knew a young man who was so busy getting his affairs in order for his wedding journey that he forgot to look at the clock, and missed the train that was to take him to the ceremony.

But for any intellectual purpose, artificial stimulants to the memory are often worse than useless.

Now, third, we want to remember as many facts as we can make use of in any way, either to aid our judgment or to enlarge our minds. I hope that few of us — few even of girls fourteen or fifteen years old — fancy that isolated facts have much value. Once during my childhood a lecturer came into our village with the announcement that he had invented a system for remembering everything. He selected one of the brightest little girls in school, and after training her one afternoon, he exhibited her to his audience in the evening. He asked for dates of the most disconnected facts one after another, and she gave every one triumphantly. I am not quite sure that she could not have learned them as quickly without any system, though in that case she

would have probably forgotten them sooner. Then the lecturer explained his method of teaching her. I remember but one example, — she had said that Judge Story died in 1845. Each figure corresponded to some letter in the professor's scheme. The " 1 " being disregarded, " 8 4 5 " represented f r l. This was to remind the learner of the word " farewell " from which it was an easy step to say that Judge Story bade farewell to the world at that date! She then retranslated the word " farewell " into figures, and had won her fact. I am positive that she had no idea who Judge Story was or why it was essential to know the date of his death. Indeed if any one tells me that I am wrong in that particular I shall not insist that I am not; or rather, I know I am not mistaken in the date, but it may be that it was some other judge who died then! So it does not seem to me that this was a very fructifying fact for either of us to know. Moreover I have often wondered what could have been done with any other events which had happened to occur in 1845, for instance those connected with the Mexican War, since " farewell " would have stood uncompromisingly for every one of them.

There are many memory-systems extant, — some no doubt much better than others, — but it is a great question whether arbitrary facts, however firmly fixed in the mind, do not on the whole cumber the ground instead of enriching it. Of course any fact may

sometime be of use. Thrifty housekeepers often save odds and ends with the plea that "sometime the want of it will be more than the worth of it." Even in the case of housekeepers it may be questioned whether it is wise to fill small rooms with débris which has only a prospective usefulness; and what shall we say of a Toodles who actually goes out and buys a coffin because "sometime it will be handy to have it in the house"? The brains of most of us are too limited in capacity to be crowded with a great deal of unassorted material. We cannot afford to know everything. We cannot therefore afford to use a system which insists on teaching us everything.

In one of Miss Edgeworth's stories, — "The Good French Governess," I think, — she describes a young girl who had been taught entirely by memorizing facts. Isabella expected to astonish her new governess by the glibness with which she recited a list of the dates of inventions, beginning, I dare say, with Greek fire and coming down to the steam-engine. The governess, however, refused to be overwhelmed, but asked the young lady what was the use of all these dates. The pupil coloured, stammered, and finally said it was certainly a good thing to know when paper was first used. The governess was not easily persuaded even of this; but at last glancing over the list again, she noticed that many years had elapsed between the invention of paper and that of printing — far be it from me to know how many!

"That is worth knowing," she said. "It shows how very slowly invention progressed in those days." You see, with her, facts to be worth anything must lead to an end.

However, it is no doubt an innocent ambition to wish to be well-informed, so I will add to the list of things we want to remember —

Fourth, the things that others about us know and expect us to know.

This kind of memory has a practical value. It helps us to appear well; sometimes it helps us to earn money; but so far as the culture either of our mind or character is concerned, it is not worth much.

When I was a girl I heard a cousin of mine, then in college, tell the story of a fellow-student who was discovered reading one of Scott's novels in a corner of the library, and who inquired very earnestly, "Who was this 'Waverley,' anyhow?" That struck the group of cousins as a great joke. None of us could understand how anybody who could read could be so ignorant. Since then, however, I have no doubt that all of us have made blunders which stamped us as equally ignorant in the estimation of those who detected them. I should be able to forgive the young reader in the library now, especially if I found that he was capable of enjoying Scott, which some of those who have "Waverley's" biography at their tongue's end seem to be incapable of

doing. We are always ready to laugh at anybody who does not know what we know, and that is one reason we have such agonies of fear lest somebody should discover the weak spots in our own armour. But why should we be ashamed not to know a thing? No one can know everything. The greatest men, if they would take you into their confidence, would probably tell you that they had sometimes made mistakes at which a schoolboy would blush; yet the most philosophical among us do suffer more from involuntary slips of memory than from the infraction of some weightier matters of the law. And not altogether without reason; for all of us who have had refined and educated parents, and who have had the ordinary school advantages, do know certain current facts, unless we are extraordinarily stupid, or have been culpably careless. We condemn ourselves when we admit our ignorance. Yet not one of us is infallible; so when we laugh at other people's blunders, let us be good-natured, and when we give other people occasion to laugh at us, let us still be good-natured; and moreover let us not be too downcast because of our shortcomings, but try to improve.

And now, at last, how shall we make our own all the manifold facts we want to remember?

We can fix the host of little items belonging to our duties by making memoranda in a pocket note-book and consulting these every day. A lady connected with a

great Boston daily paper relates that the number of details she feels obliged not to forget is so great that she keeps a diary laid out for months in advance, and that in May of one year she entered the memorandum, "Nov. 12. To be married to —— ——." Perhaps we should not all need such scrupulous notes as that, but I think any of us may use those we do need without compunction. I know a young lady who is confidential clerk in a large business house. She said a few days ago that she was almost beside herself with the number of things she must remember, but that she supposed it would be ruinous to her memory if she kept lists of them. I believe she was quite wrong. Her object is to do certain things at certain times, not to be able to repeat the list in alphabetical order. If she could only relieve her mind of all this unnecessary strain, she could exercise it sufficiently for sound health upon those things which she really wants to be laid up in its store-house forevermore. Of course she must remember enough of the business to guide her intelligently in carrying it on.

For learning those things which are to be a permanent addition to our stock of knowledge, a few simple principles must be observed.

1. We must get an accurate impression of what we want to remember.

This is closely connected with our powers of observation. Those who observe well do not forget what they

see. But we want to remember a great many things besides those we see. In studying history, for instance, suppose we think that it would be a disgrace to any American woman not to know the principles laid down in the Declaration of Independence; we must study that document, not only as a whole, but sentence by sentence, and make sure that we see exactly what it means. More than that, we must read its history, and find out what we can of the motives which influenced the various signers; and by that time, I think, we might have our "accurate impression." If we consider study of this kind beyond us, we may be right; but in that case we shall have to give up learning the Declaration of Independence.

I once knew a young woman whose early education had been neglected. At last the opportunity to go to school came to her. She was full of ambition, and ready to study night and day; but she could never learn a lesson. She failed so utterly one day on some rules for parsing that the teacher spoke to her privately of the matter. The poor girl grew red in the face, and then burst into tears. "I studied, Miss Smith, till I fainted away," she said. And yet she did not know the very first rule: "Adjectives and participles belong to nouns and pronouns." The teacher wondered how such hard study could produce such a small result, and on inquiry learned that the poor student, in her desire to be thor-

ough, had studied each word twenty times before going on to the next, — "Adjectives, adjectives, adjectives, etc.; and, and, and, etc.; participles, participles, participles, etc." She had a perception of the separate words, but naturally saw no connection between them. We need a whole impression of whatever we are trying to learn.

2. We must think about what we are learning.

As long as we are looking at an object, or reading about an event, our minds may wander without our knowing it. But when we shut our eyes and try to recall the object or the event, we find out our deficiencies at once, and can go back to the study with an intelligent idea of the way to supply them. We must continue to do this till we have thoroughly learned what we are trying to learn. We shall succeed in the end, unless we have undertaken some subject really beyond our powers; and in that case, the sooner we find it out the better.

3. Frequent repetition is necessary to keep anything in our minds.

Even when we have mastered some subject completely for the time being, yet if we put it aside and go on to another subject, we shall find on coming back to it a few months later that some of the outlines are beginning to fade. We must see that they are traced firmly once more, or we shall soon lose the whole picture. If, however, we learned the subject thoroughly at first, it is

easy to review it. "My sister has to spend more time than I do over advance lessons," said a school-girl, with a roguish smile; "but I notice that it saves her time when we come to reviews." And I have heard a music-teacher say that a pupil who had once learned to play a piece of music without stumbling could take it up again years after with the certainty of being able to play it correctly with half an hour's practice.

There are various kinds of repetition suited to the different things we try to learn. For instance, let us consider a moment the different ways of studying history and poetry, for these two studies are particularly adapted to the exercise of the memory, though that is by no means the highest use of either of them.

In a poem every word has a value; it cannot be changed or misplaced without destroying the beauty of the passage. We must learn poetry *verbatim;* indeed, unless we do so we never quite take in the full meaning of even our favourite poems. This is one reason why learning poetry has such an elevating influence. Once learned, it must be repeated over and over again, every day at first, then every week perhaps, and then at longer intervals; and we must not be contented with making a slip here and there. But all this repetition takes time, and has neither the mental nor the moral value of the first learning of a poem. Besides, we may wish to learn something new. I am sure none of us can afford to let

the habit of studying the best poetry ever be lost out of our daily lives. We need its high companionship constantly. Fortunately, though it is often thought that young people learn more readily than older ones, it is not altogether true. A middle-aged friend of mine tells me that she has made it a point to learn a few lines of poetry every day for many years, and that she does so more and more easily; but she says she often forgets what she learns, simply because it is impossible to repeat the great numbers of poems she knows as often as she could repeat the comparatively small number she knew when a girl. Some of us think it would be hard to find time every day to learn even a few lines; but surely we must give a part of every Sunday to such elevating study, and if we learn half a dozen lines on Sunday, and take pains to repeat them every day through the week, we shall soon have much good treasure laid up where moth and rust will not corrupt.

It would be mere folly to learn history *verbatim*. Here we want facts first as a foundation, but far more, relations between facts. It may be a good exercise for us when an examiner asks us all sorts of questions in a breath: "Who won the battle of Waterloo?" "When was Charles the First beheaded?" "What is the Rosetta Stone?" Indeed, I once knew a very entertaining teacher of history who contended that the true way to equip her pupils to meet sudden demands upon them

was to ask them such a jumble of questions every day. "Nobody in society," she would say, "will ever inquire whether you can give a clear account of the English Revolution or not, but anybody may turn to you and ask when Charles the First was beheaded." She was right; but after all culture does not consist in being able to answer other people's questions, — though, indeed, as that is very convenient, I think a little sharp practice of this kind would occasionally be good for most of us. We like to have our facts well in hand, ready for instant use; but if we hope to remember much of history, or to make it in any way vital to us, we must study very differently. We must take an epoch as a whole; we must learn about all the great men of the time, and understand their acts; we must learn the geography of the country, the condition of its arts and sciences and literature, until all our study blends and forms a living whole. When we have once studied an epoch in this way, we shall always remember the main features of it; but we shall forget details, and it would of course be impossible to go over all the same ground again and again. It is not even desirable, for many of the details we have forgotten were only of use as they served to make the whole picture more vivid, and other details would answer the purpose as well. So I should say, that if you find yourself forgetting the particulars of the life of Washington, which you perhaps read in Mr. Scudder's

little book in the "Riverside Library for Young People," it would be best not to re-read that book, but to take up the larger "Life" by Mr. Lodge, where you will have the important facts differently presented with some additional ones; the next time you find yourself doubtful on these points, read Irving's "Washington," and so on.

Suppose you have read a general history of England. It would be a good plan to take next a general history of France, — for there has been a constant interaction between the two countries for hundreds of years, — and in the story of France you will review the main events of the English story from a new standpoint.

And now a word as to dates. There are not more than twenty or thirty dates that it is absolutely necessary for us to know; but it is often disgraceful not to know the epoch in which any event occurred. For instance, we need not feel ourselves ruined for life if we should happen to think Columbus discovered America in 1493, — though I admit that is one of the mistakes an American girl ought not to make; but to fancy that he discovered it in 1392 or 1592 would be fatally wrong, — though the figures themselves would be no more askew, — because such an error would affect our whole conception of the last part of the fifteenth century. If we know the story of the discovery well, the one date, 1492, will tell us a great many things, — that Ferdinand and

Isabella ruled Spain at that time, that Henry VII. was then on the throne of England, etc. If we know how to group our facts, eighteen dates will give us approximately the time of every great event of the Christian era.

I should be willing to learn a few dates artificially; and I am not one of those who despise the lists of Roman emperors and English kings. These lists are good pegs to hang miscellaneous knowledge upon until we have collected enough of it to arrange in some organic form. Nevertheless I think we should all beware of often applying artificial stimulants to our memory.

V.

HOW SHALL WE LEARN TO THINK?

IF we have learned how to observe in any broad sense, and if we have then learned how to fix essential facts in our memory, we shall be already far on the way toward learning to think, for in intelligent observation or memory we must use judgment.

For example, we look at a wild rose till we know every part in detail, and then we examine a strawberry-blossom. If we have made the observation faithfully, it will not take a teacher to tell us that the two plants belong to one family. A spark of understanding will flash across from one set of observations to the other; we shall then be ready to test the whole floral kingdom by comparing every member of it with a rose. Is this flower like a rose, or is it not? If not, how does it differ? One might study botany on an uninhabited island in this way, and group plants naturally, making a close approximation to the well-known written systems. A lily is far removed from a rose, and both are very different from a dandelion. Which of the three

does a buttercup most resemble? The first steps in the study of any science are steps of observation, but they lead directly up to comparison and inference, and in other words, to judgment.

Or suppose we are trying to learn something of an epoch in history, — for instance, the French Revolution. We cannot even remember the leading facts unless we understand them. We must think of the causes which brought on the Revolution before we can remember the difference between the Jacobins and the Girondists. We must consider the character and circumstances of individual actors in the drama before we can remember unerringly the part they took. Was Madame Roland a Jacobin or a Girondist? The girls who can answer that question six months after they have read her life will be able to do so because they have thought about her character and have understood something of her relation to the times. To remember essential things, we must first use our judgment in deciding what are essential.

I have already spoken of Science and History as studies which cultivate respectively observation and memory; but it will be clear that they both have a far higher use in teaching us to think. The sciences which are learned principally by trying experiments — like chemistry and physics — are especially of use here, for we always have to ask ourselves what the experiment

proves? History develops the power to form a different class of judgments; and a broad study of history is indispensable to all who wish to be able to think wisely on current affairs.

For precision of thought there is no instructor like mathematics, and geometry beyond all other branches of them. Such an overwhelming majority of girls hate mathematics that it is hard to know just how to persuade them of its importance. I knew one indefatigable teacher, who used to labour with each pupil in private till she had absolutely convinced her that she (the pupil) wanted to master her mathematics in the most complete and thorough way. This teacher not only had a beautiful and noble character, but possessed such sympathy and power of attraction that the girls' love for her probably formed a preponderating factor in their enthusiasm for the study. At all events, they yielded, to the very last girl; the most stupid one found that she could understand what she had thought she could not; and that wonderful teacher set her impress upon the school, so that the high standard in mathematics was maintained there long after she was in her grave. More than that, all her scholars carried out into life the habit of asking, "Why?" when any new course of thought or action opened before them; and "Why?" is one of those little words which have a far-reaching effect in teaching us how to think on all subjects.

Most people — boys as well as girls — are naturally rather dull at mathematics; but boys like them better than girls do, and they are always taught that practical success in life depends on knowing at least arithmetic well. Girls have practical need of arithmetic, too, though they do not often require quite as many of its technicalities. But they are tacitly encouraged to indulge their dislike, which is usually extreme, on the ground that they will not need to earn their living by figures, though, as a matter of fact, a great many of them are obliged to do this.

My present plea for mathematics, however, is based entirely on their importance in teaching precise thinking. I know girls' schools in which they hold an honoured place, and others in which they are virtually ignored. In the latter the girls sometimes have a broader culture when they leave school, but their tone of mind is less vigorous, and ten years later, the mathematicians have often distanced them in general culture. Of course, exclusive devotion to mathematics would be narrowing; though when they are carried into the domains of Chemistry and Crystallography, etc., they do open a vast and splendid territory to the thinker. As I have yet to hear of the girls' school which lays undue stress on such study, I think it safe to advise every girl who reads these pages to make the most of her opportunities in this direction. No doubt too much precision is fatal

to large judgments, but I do not happen to know any girl who is in danger of being too precise.

An accomplished lady, who during several years had taught the same set of girls a variety of subjects, ranging from mathematics and physics to botany and rhetoric, said: "It was more delightful at the time to take them botanizing in the woods, or to discuss the figures of speech, than to drill them in mathematics; but in looking back on the work, the mathematics give me most satisfaction, for I could see how the minds of the girls gained in power from year to year."

But as I write my thoughts are often with those girls who have no teachers and must learn their mathematics alone. This is not always a misfortune. I am sorry to say that a great deal of the confusion girls find in mathematics is due to incompetent primary teaching. Advanced teachers are usually capable, but the mischief is done before the pupil comes into their hands. Now, a girl who finds mathematics a puzzle, and who has no teacher to help her, may be excused for not trying to do great things in this department; but there are two subjects perhaps within her reach. One is mental arithmetic, — altogether the most important part of arithmetic. I do not believe there are many young women twenty years old who are sufficiently in earnest to study Warren Colburn's ancient "Mental Arithmetic" fifteen minutes a day, following his processes exactly, who could not con-

quer the book in six months, and be the better for it ever afterwards.

The other subject I would recommend is geometry, for here the reasoning is not so based on arithmetic and algebra that ignorance of these will be an insuperable obstacle in the path. Take any text-book, learn the axioms at the beginning, set down the first proposition with its figure on paper, and then shut your book and see if you do not already know enough to prove the proposition; if not, you will have to read the proof, but that is no reason why you should not try to prove the next proposition for yourself. It will be as interesting as an enigma and more productive of results. Of course, if you have no gift whatever for geometry, you can easily stop at any time; but if you have any natural capacity for it, you will succeed with some propositions, and you will understand the proofs you are obliged to read. When you finish the book you will know a great deal more of geometry than most school-graduates do. And after such a course you will never be as contented with loose and vague arguments on any topic as you were before.

I have heard of a man who reads a new book in the following manner. He first thinks over its subject, and perhaps puts down on paper the headings of the different subdivisions which he believes ought to be treated.

Then he refers to the table of contents, where of course he finds some points which he has omitted, though sometimes perhaps he has taken a more comprehensive view than the author. Then he considers the question to be treated in each chapter, and settles in his mind his own opinions upon it. Now, when he reads the chapter, he is prepared to judge whether his first ideas were correct or not. If the author has anything to teach him, he is pretty sure to learn it. Such a plan of reading would not do for all kinds of books, but is of great use in cases where an appeal is made to our judgment. I should be very glad if some young girl would try the experiment with the little volume I am now writing. Let her take the subject of any chapter in the book, and think about it before she reads it. Perhaps her ideas would be clearer if she would write them down. When she reads the chapter, she may find that she has anticipated all the good advice I mean to give her, and that she positively disagrees with some of my opinions: she will then be all ready to consider the opinions which those wiser than I have expressed on the same subject in better books. Whether what I have to say is useful in itself or not, the exercise will have been useful to her in teaching her how to think.

It will be still more to the purpose if she will try the same experiment with some masterpiece of literature. I remember an earnest young girl who was interested in

Plato's "Dialogues," and coming to the question, "Can virtue be taught?" she set herself the task of writing a composition on the subject. Of course she was all the more able to appreciate the words of Socrates when she came to read them.

To learn to think, we must think. If we do not know how to think, we must try to think. Every day brings experiences which ought to make us ask ourselves the pregnant little questions, "How?" and "Why?" We must not grudge the strength and time necessary to answer them for ourselves; but we must answer them humbly. We must hold ourselves ready for new light, and be willing to correct our judgments by comparing them with those of wiser thinkers. We know books and people to be trusted. Let us go to them for help, while we hold ourselves free to weigh their views in the balances with our own. This attitude of mind will, I feel, do more in teaching us to judge justly than any special study; logic itself could hardly help us so much; and a serious study of logic is rather too difficult for most young girls who have to work alone, though it seems to me that even the alphabet of the science is worth something.

Still, there are certain studies which are particularly beneficial to those who are trying to form the judgment. The science of criticism is of the greatest value. Read your Shakspeare, for instance, not so that you may be

ready with quotations, but in such a way that you may understand life and character. Think of the heroes and heroines, and try to grasp their motives of action. Try their deeds by the highest standards, and see whether they will meet the test. You need not read a single volume of criticism to do this, you must simply live with these great men and women. Afterwards you may compare your thoughts with those of the critics, and you will find that others have a wider horizon than yours, and that with them you can climb to higher mountain-tops.

And then, for the best thought one must study poetry. Matthew Arnold says that "the essential part of poetic greatness is the noble and profound application of ideas to life." This is the spirit for the study of poetry. We must look for the noble and profound ideas, and endeavour to apply them to life. Perhaps most young girls will find it hard to do this at first without help. But does not the most obscure among you know some one who can help you a little, if in no other way, at least by suggesting books to read? At any rate, you can begin with Shakspeare, and you cannot help being elevated by constant contact with so grand a mind. I heard a lady say once, in speaking of an acquaintance, "She would be more likely to know that a poem was a good one, if she saw it in a book than if she saw it in a newspaper!" Now, you ought to know whether a poem gives you high thoughts, whether you

see it in a book or in a newspaper. But inasmuch as there is more good poetry in books than in periodicals, you will learn discrimination more quickly if you spend your time over the great poets than if you waste it in trying to sift the wheat from the chaff in the daily newspapers, — at least at first. By-and-by the time will come when you will know a fine thing in a moment wherever you see it by this infallible test, — it will uplift and comfort you.

VI.

THE STUDY OF LANGUAGES.

I HOPE I have already made it clear that all study should have for its object the enlargement of the mind and the development of the character. When we begin to consider the claims of special studies our path is not always quite plain. I am one of those who believe in the fullest possible education for everybody. To history, literature, the sciences, mathematics, music, and art, I would gladly add as many languages as the student can really master, provided — and this is a very important stipulation — that nothing more important is sacrificed, — health, for instance, or happiness, or

> "A heart at leisure from itself
> To soothe and sympathize."

As a matter of fact, however, so complete a curriculum is not possible for most of us. Capacity and circumstances decide what each can do. Now, while I by no means despise the man who "can ask for gingerbread in twenty languages," I think most of us will not use our lives to the best advantage in studying so many different

tongues; and I think it would be a real misfortune for those young girls who are trying to learn something without the aid of a teacher to spend most of their time over languages, as I know they are often tempted to do.

There is a story to the point told in the recent memorial, "William Ellis and his Conduct-Teaching." As Mr. Ellis's name will not be familiar to most girls, I will say that he was a rich business man who devoted all his spare time and money to the founding of schools which should make conduct the most important branch of study. He was at one time employed to teach the royal children of England, and one of them, at least, — the present ex-Empress of Germany, — always held her teacher in reverent remembrance. He was once consulted by a lady who was looking for an instructor in Spanish, I think, for her daughter, who had already been taught three or four other languages. "I suppose your daughter understands astronomy?" he asked. "Oh, no." "Botany, perhaps?" "No." And so he continued his questions, always receiving a negative answer. At last he said, smiling, "Is n't it almost a pity to give her another opportunity of advertising her ignorance?"

The truth is, language rightly studied is of the highest value; but as a mere accomplishment, it is one of the most barren of pursuits. I am very sorry to say that

most girls study the languages — especially the modern languages — to which they are most attracted, chiefly as accomplishments. Now we will not be unfair even to accomplishments; so let us admit at once that it is a fine thing for a girl to know French, or German, or Italian well, to speak it with a perfect accent, to write it fluently and correctly, and to read it at sight. And then let us immediately add that such a genuine accomplishment as that is not only very rare, but entirely impossible, unless the pupil is both rich and gifted, and we all know such a combination is unusual.

Mr. Hamerton says, in his "Intellectual Life," that no one can possibly learn more than three languages perfectly; and that the conditions necessary for even so many are, that one parent should be a native of one country, the other of another, and that the family should live in the third. As a general thing, even those who live in foreign countries do not speak two languages perfectly. If they master the new language entirely, they find themselves forgetting certain idioms of their mother-tongue.

So, to be really accomplished in any language, we must have opportunities which involve money. And any one who has witnessed the painful spectacle of the vast numbers of girls' schools in which all other education is made secondary to the study of French, and who knows how far the pupils are in the end from reading, writing,

and speaking the French language correctly, will not need to be told that more than average powers must supplement riches in order that French may be an accomplishment. I dwell a little on this point, because a knowledge of French is looked upon as one of the hall-marks which distinguish a lady; and this is the *ignis fatuus* which allures many a poor girl to spend her time in trying to acquire it. I do not wish to discourage the study, but merely to show just what measure of success is possible. A French accent, for instance, is almost a monopoly of the rich; though very few of them ever gain it, for it can only be caught by constantly hearing the language spoken by cultivated teachers. I sometimes think that one reason the rich prize the accent so much is because they have such an advantage over the poor in that respect, while a clever student may easily win the honours for thoroughness in the grammar or literature. At all events, they do prize it; and few teachers are so unmercifully criticised as those unlucky Frenchmen and Frenchwomen who are suspected of having been brought up anywhere except in the very centre of the city of Paris.

It will be seen that I think that any girl, and especially any poor girl, should have some better object than to become accomplished, if she undertakes the study of French. The same may be said of other languages, only most others are pursued more earnestly. Perhaps

the fact that French is the court language of Europe has attracted to it just those people to whom the surface is everything.

There are those who recommend the study of the modern languages for their practical use. Circumstances decide this matter. A girl who is employed by a large merchant or manufacturer having dealings in South America, may find it greatly to the purpose to learn Spanish. Having learned it for its bread-winning value, she may be able to use it to still better ends, — for a knowledge of its literature, perhaps, or to help her to comprehend the life of nations so different from her own.

I know a young lady who came to the city to study something, — she had not a very distinct idea what. She did not expect to earn her living, but she thought it would be well to study something which might be a prop in time of need. She began with shorthand; but finding it extremely irksome, she reflected on the remoteness of the contingency which would lead her to use it, and determined to try some language. She found herself inclined toward Volapük. It seemed to her that it would be a great thing to understand a universal language. She did not realize that Volapük was an artificial language, that could teach her no more of the structure of language in general than shorthand could, that it had absolutely no literature, and that it

could do nothing to help her understand other modes of life. The time may come when Volapük will be a convenient acquisition for a business woman, but it can never be a means of culture to anybody; while the study of any natural language must expand the mind, even if pursued for the money it will bring.

In these days we all go abroad, or expect to go. Of course it is a convenience to understand the language of the countries we visit; but this is by no means essential. One of the most highly cultivated ladies I ever knew, having been obliged by weakness of the eyes to omit some branches from a life-long course of study, had decided she could best spare the languages, and beyond the rudiments of Latin, learned when a child, she had only English at her command. When the time came for her to go abroad, she had some misgivings; but a year or two later she could exult in having been all over Europe and having found English sufficient for her needs, while she had often succeeded in extricating her party from difficulties which had baffled the linguists in it. There are English-speaking railway-officials, and clerks, and servants everywhere. So it seems that it is hardly best to learn a language simply for its practical benefit unless we have some definite plan for its immediate use.

There are, however, other reasons for studying languages which are weighty. It is worth much to have the

key to any great literature. It is true we shall never exhaust English literature, and it may appear superfluous to study that of another country. But if we could choose the masterpieces of all nations, it would be better than to spend our time exclusively upon the works of one nation. Translations will help us, but a translation cannot completely take the place of the original. Now most of us have the capacity and the opportunity to study at least one language besides our own thoroughly enough to be at home in its literature, though we must not expect to reach that degree of excellence without hard work. If literature is our aim, Greek will repay our labour better than Latin, and German better than any other modern language. But any of the languages usually pursued in schools have a noble literature to offer if we are ready to take it. I have great sympathy with those scholars who learn Italian simply for the sake of entering more fully into the spirit of Dante.

There is another point of view from which the study of languages, and particularly of the classics, is still more important. True culture ought to raise us above the circumstances of our own narrow lives. If we always look at things from our own standpoint, we are sure to confuse the essential and the accidental; consequently it is of the greatest value to us to bring ourselves into a position far removed from our own, to see the world if we can with the eyes of one of a different race and

time; and while all history and literature will help us to do this, a foreign language, and especially a dead language, helps us more than anything else, — for the very words (the names of utensils or of the parts of the dress) stand for something unfamiliar in our daily lives, and a translation, however useful, lessens the effect by bringing everything a little nearer our own standards. Dr. W. T. Harris, our U. S. Commissioner of Education, in a powerful paper on the "Function of the study of Latin and Greek in Education" says, "It will be acknowledged without dispute that modern civilization is derivative, resting upon the ancient Roman civilization on the one hand, and on Greek civilization on the other." And he argues that the education of a child should lead him to understand the elements of his own complex being. So he must find "one after the other the threads that compose his civilization, — threads that weave the tissue of his own nature as a product of civilization."

This paper has been given to the Bureau of Education for distribution, and deserves to be read by every student.

I do not suppose young girls who are just beginning to study any language can appreciate just how it is going to influence them; but I should be glad if what I have said might lead some of them to work with a more serious aim than to chatter about the weather in some foreign city. For I believe that every girl should learn some

language besides her own for the sake of the right mental balance. No one has a very clear idea of the structure of English who has not made some attempt to understand another language.

Pronunciation and conversation cannot be learned without a teacher; but something can be done in grammar and translation by persistent work alone. And at some time or other, the poorest of us is sure to find some one who is glad to teach us something. I have heard of a young girl who spends ten or twelve hours a day in the ill-lighted package-room of a railroad station and who yet had the energy to begin the study of French by herself. The pronunciation puzzled her, and at last she took courage to ask some questions about it of another young girl — a pupil in a fashionable school — who was in the habit of leaving her books, among which the French books were conspicuous, in the package-room. The latter was delighted. "Oh, Mamma," she exclaimed, the moment she reached home, "I have found somebody I can help! Even my French is actually going to do me some good." And so she went on helping the solitary student a little every day.

I should do my duty very ill in this chapter if I did not say that our own language deserves our study above all others. When I hear that a young lady speaks French or German as well as she does English, I always find myself wondering how well she speaks English. English

seems to be within reach of us all, and yet most of us must blush to acknowledge how imperfectly we have mastered it. How can we do better?

We are taught the rudiments of the language in school, and there are many admirable little books on words and their uses which may be of service; but we are often contented to pick up our English from the people about us, and we copy their faults as well as their virtues. Here are a few suggestions for those who have already mastered the familiar text-books on grammar and rhetoric:

1. Read the best writers.

Those who have the best things to say do not always say them in the most polished English; but a book does not become a classic unless its ideas are clearly and forcibly expressed. You may not consciously pay any attention to the language of the book you are reading, but you catch its tone, just as you do that of a living companion.

2. In speaking or writing, try to make your meaning clear, and take pains to choose the best word to express an idea.

These two suggestions seem to me most important; but for those who have time and inclination, I think a daily exercise in writing English simply for practice is valuable. It may take the form of a diary, — not a sentimental one, I hope, but one recording the most interesting events of every day. We may write a report

of lectures, or an abstract of the books we are reading. Another useful exercise is to translate a few paragraphs of some other language into idiomatic English, working over every sentence till we are sure we have rendered the exact idea in the very best way.

I once knew a young girl whose father, a clergyman with a large correspondence, employed her as an amanuensis. He gave her the substance of the letters she was to write, but she was obliged to use her own words. "When I used to read the letters to him," she said, "he always asked me if I could not express the same thing more briefly. So I have learned to write concisely, but I have no grace."

I doubt whether grace can be directly cultivated. Still, if we should try to say everything pleasantly as well as forcibly, I fancy that however concise we might be we should never be abrupt; moreover, there is a certain grace in simplicity.

VII.

THE CULTIVATION OF THE LOVE OF BEAUTY.

WHY is it that girls care so much for accomplishments? Partly, I fear, for the sake of making something of a figure in the world; but partly also, I am sure, because any true accomplishment, like music or art or dancing or horticulture, or even embroidery, adds so much to the beauty of life, and may give so much enjoyment not only to ourselves but to our friends, — though unfortunately most accomplishments are not used as unselfishly as we might wish them to be, which perhaps only means that very few of us really are accomplished; that is, we are always working up to the point where we can begin to use our acquisitions for the delight of others, who would not be at all delighted if called upon to share our gifts in their present imperfect state.

Uneducated girls are apt to overrate the effect of accomplishments, not understanding how few people possess any. I have already shown how rare it is to have a good command of French. In Mr. Howells's story, "A Woman's Reason," Helen Harkness is described as

having received the best education which money could buy, and yet when she tried to think of a means of self-support, she found her knowledge of music and art and the languages altogether too superficial for the purpose. It is true we do not wish for accomplishments for the sake of earning our living; but unless they go deep enough to make that possible, we may have a right to wonder whether they deserve to be called accomplishments. A real accomplishment involves intellect.

But suppose we never can sing or draw or dance well, is that any reason for not doing the best we can? Not if we keep our eyes steadily turned in the right direction. If we love beauty, we must wish to do all we can to make our own little corner beautiful. We may not succeed in producing beauty ourselves, but every attempt we make helps us to see beauty, and even to show it to others. A selfish girl will hope that no one will detect her false notes in singing; an unselfish girl will rejoice that others have a truer ear than her own.

I could never feel with Keats that beauty and truth are identical; yet in the highest sense this must be true, and beauty is one of the great essentials of life. No one can be making the "most of the stuff" who does not love beauty more and more as time goes on. And so I should like every girl to try to become accomplished; only let her be sure that she does it for love of beauty and not for love of herself.

I cannot tell a girl how to become a musician or an artist. If she has such an aim she must have special teachers; and even then she will not succeed unless Nature has given her some power. But so far as culture and character go, the love of beauty is more important than the ability to create it. How can we nourish this love?

Most of us are blind to some forms of beauty. Perhaps we are carried out of ourselves by fine music, but hardly know the difference between a fine picture and a daub. A sunset moves us, but the greatest poetry tires us. How can we help ourselves?

Now only those who can themselves draw or paint or work in clay can really criticise a work of art, though one who has keen powers of observation with the necessary mental grasp can form some judgment of its merits. I cannot teach anybody to be a critic. Yet shall we not all try to see the little we can see of every kind of beauty? Though I cannot speak with authority, I feel inclined to say something about the study of art, for my experience leads me to think that untaught girls are less awake to the real meaning of paintings and statuary than to most other forms of beauty, — especially in this country, where outside of a few large cities there is no opportunity whatever to see good models. Indeed few Americans know anything of art. Those we call cultivated simply know about it, — the great names, the schools, the

galleries where the famous pictures are to be found, etc. Even so much is very pleasant, but it has no deep foundation.

Mrs. Oliphant has brought out this distinction clearly in "Agnes." Agnes was the daughter of a blacksmith, a man of high character, refined feeling, and good intellect. She was like her father, and had all the instincts of a lady. She married a man of station, who appeared to be her superior, but who was so only in externals. He took her to Italy, and she began to know his friends. The pictures entirely bewildered her. She loved all kinds of beauty. Nature or the best poetry touched her far more deeply than it did any one else in that English colony. She was even able to respond to music as she ought, but she could never say the right thing about a picture. Now it was not true that most of her husband's friends really saw more than she did; they simply knew what they were expected to see and despised her for not knowing.

Few persons do see what is to be seen, and so long as a foolish vanity makes them wish to appear as if they did see, no progress is possible. Not long ago I had the pleasure of passing an afternoon in the studio of an artist who has just returned to this country after living many years abroad. In speaking of the different atmosphere for work here and in Europe, he said that America was disheartening, because no one seemed to care to find out what an artist was trying to do. "Bostonians," he said,

"would seldom hazard any praise for fear of praising the wrong thing. New Yorkers," he added with frank simplicity, "are even more ignorant than Bostonians; but they have a more genial effect on an artist, for they will admire freely, not being so conceited nor so afraid of making a mistake!"

An able New York critic said to a friend of mine, "When you look at a picture, do not say, 'I like it,' or 'I don't like it,' at first; but try to see what there is in it."

All artists mean to express the beauty they themselves see. It may be very little, and they may not succeed in expressing even that. If they fail in expression, our study will be barren, though it may perhaps teach us something of the value of technique. But if they have expressed even a little beauty, it will often be just that which we should not have seen without their help, for every artist must emphasize that part of the beauty of the universe which comes within his own range of vision, and the universe is so vast that no one sees it all. One artist has an eye for colour, one for form, another for life and action, another still sees through the dull and faded features of common faces to the soul beyond, and their pictures silently help us to see the same things as if a friend stood at our side and pointed them out.

If we try to see what there is in a picture, I do not think our time is quite wasted, even if we study poor

ones. If there is nothing there — or nothing for us — we shall soon find it out. Still, we want the best from the very beginning to supply us with standards of excellence. Let us at least study what we believe to be the best within our reach. In Boston, for instance, we know that the Art Museum is full of objects worth seeing. The pictures are not as good as the statuary; and if we have no friend to guide us, perhaps the best thing we can do is to begin with the sculptures of the Parthenon, which we know to belong to the most perfect period of Greek art.

But suppose we want to look at pictures. I think it would be a good plan to spend an hour some day in a single room, looking at each painting and trying to find out its value. Then, having made our first crude observations, let us ask the one among our friends who knows most of art what he thinks on these points. Or, if we have seen something by a famous artist, we may read about him, and even if we do not meet with any explicit criticism of the painting we have been examining, we are sure to find some estimate of the qualities belonging to his work in general. Now we can return to the pictures themselves, and see whether we are inclined to hold to our first judgment.

It is not best to look at many works of art at once. We do not fairly see them. But the dullest of us can usually find something of worth if we will take time.

For example, among the reproductions of certain reliefs from the tomb of Ti, in the first Egyptian room of the Boston Art Museum, is one in which the careless girl would notice simply a few cattle with their drivers, and she would probably then pass on to the next. I cannot say what the hieroglyphics of the panel may mean. It may be that they tell the whole story. But you can discover it for yourself. If you will stand before the sculpture for a few minutes, you will notice that one of the men is carrying a calf on his shoulders, — a pitiful, anxious calf, which is turning its head backward. Next in order follow three cows, and you can instantly pick out the mother of the calf by the distress in her attitude. Now, you may not call this work of some long-dead Egyptian beautiful, but it is touching; and even a young girl who knows nothing of Egyptian history would feel a thrill of kinship with that ancient people when she had found out the meaning of this representation for herself. Those of us who have no natural taste for art are in great danger of depending on the title of a picture for its meaning and not on the picture itself. This is what artists condemn as judging a picture from a literary point of view. I suppose, for that matter, that all of us who have not been taught correct drawing and colouring must inevitably judge pictures largely from a literary point of view; but if we only find some real beauty in them, that is better than nothing.

In New York the Metropolitan Museum is open to everybody. In Washington, in St. Louis, and in many other large cities there are collections accessible to the public containing at least some works of undoubted excellence which a beginner might study with a certainty of being repaid. There are thousands of country girls all over the United States who are in the habit of going into these cities several times a year at least to do shopping, and if they chose to give even an hour of their busy day to the best art to be had in the city, — not merely a hasty glance to the latest exhibition in an art-dealer's rooms, — they would find that their power of appreciating the best slowly increased from year to year. Of course the girls who live in these cities have a hundred times better opportunity. Do they use it?

A few years ago there was a genuine Raphael in the Metropolitan Museum, — the Madonna of the Candelabrum. How many New York girls of leisure took the pains to study it?

But though thousands of girls might look at these fine collections if they would, there are a million at least in the United States who have no access to anything of the kind. What can such girls do? Not much, but something. It is now easy to get really good unmounted photographs of most of the great pictures of the world. Those who cannot find them nearer can always send to the Soule Photograph Co., 338 Washington Street, Bos-

ton. If a club could be formed in any town or even in two or three adjoining towns, so that by the payment of a small fee twenty or thirty dollars' worth of photographs could be bought every year, and the members would study these, it would not be long before they would know more about pictures than most people who are called cultivated, and if they faithfully looked for the best in every picture they would gradually learn to find it.

Those who cannot afford to buy even photographs may be able to borrow such as illustrate particular artists and schools from the Art Department of the "Study At Home Society," 41 Marlborough Street, Boston.

Then suppose we look also for the material for pictures. In the most obscure circle there is always some wrinkled woman with a sweet mouth, or some toil-worn man with clear eyes, who may give to us the same elevation of thought that we get most easily from a work of art.

I heard a cultivated lady say once, "I never cared much for Nature till after I had studied paintings." This is a curious reversal of the true order of things. You see, however, it is true that the artists who work sincerely do show us what most of us are slow to find without them; yet if we have the determination, we can find the beauty for ourselves, and that is better than to know all the galleries of Europe by heart.

In the study of painting or sculpture or architecture books will sometimes help us, — not of course to produce,

but to appreciate. I once heard a distinguished librarian say in answer to some one who had asked for a list of such books, "Begin with Kugler." The half-dozen small illustrated volumes of Kugler's "Hand-book of Painting" would probably take a girl further than most works which are equally accessible on the way to just views about pictures.

For those girls who expect to study the pictures of Italy at first hand there is probably no guide to compare with Burckhardt's "Cicerone." Passavant's illustrated "Life of Raphael" is of great service to those who stay at home; and there are other illustrated lives of the artists, — particularly Black's "Michael Angelo," Crowe and Cavalcaselle's "Titian," the "Leonardo da Vinci" and "Albert Dürer" of Mrs. Heaton, and her translation of Meyer's "Correggio," — which are of value.

If you wish to know something of sculpture, no single work will give you a clearer and more trustworthy outline of the subject than Mrs. Lucy M. Mitchell's "History of Ancient Sculpture." It has the merit of being more entertaining than many standard works, and better than all, the illustrations are unusually fine, even the wood-engravings being artistic. A supplementary portfolio of twenty phototype plates, entitled "Selections from Ancient Sculpture," may be used for further illustration by those of you who can afford such a work. Mrs. Mitchell has a special power in describing a work of art in few

words which help a beginner to see where its real value lies, so that her descriptions taken in connection with her illustrations are a true education for the reader.

But in this chapter I am less concerned to show how we may learn about works of art than how we may actually see what they mean. We want to enter into the life of others far away, and under all disguises. We look, for instance, at such casts as those of Lincoln Cathedral in the Art Museum in Boston, and we hastily say they are grotesque and not beautiful. Yet if we look a little longer at some of those queer angels perched up in painful positions, while they twang their antiquated musical instruments, we begin to see in their blissful smiles a hint of the aspiring souls within.

But while we try to see the beauty we are sure there must be in any masterpiece which has stood the test of centuries, let us never pretend to find what we do not find. Let us not be ashamed of our ignorance, and let us express our judgments with entire simplicity and modesty.

I think sometimes that those who are totally uninstructed have a better chance than those who have had generations of culture, because they have no false theories to mislead them. Our Puritan ancestors sternly set beauty aside, and a great many of us were accordingly born without an eye for colour or an ear for harmony. That is a great loss; but if we inherit the sincerity of

our forefathers, it may help us more to catch the divine meaning in any form of art than a quick eye or a sensitive ear.

How shall those of us not specially endowed learn to love the most beautiful music? By hearing it, of course. It is on this principle that all the private schools in Boston close early on Fridays so that the young scholars may spend their afternoon at the Symphony Rehearsal.

I heard a young lady say not long ago, "I have had to go to the Symphony Concerts ever since they were founded. I used to think they were tedious, and beg to stay at home; but my father said that if I could not appreciate such music, I must learn to appreciate it, and now it seems the most beautiful thing in the world." I do not think such heroic measures would succeed in all cases; and at all events it is not possible for every girl in the land to go to a Symphony Concert every Friday afternoon. Even in Boston, as the speculators buy most of the seats, such an education is out of the reach of most poor girls. Very well. Then hear the best music which is within reach. If you cannot hear Beethoven, some one in your own village may be able to sing hymns sweetly. Ask this friend to sing to you often. If you practise music yourself, do not think a false note is of no consequence; and do not beg your teacher to give you something showy when you might learn something noble.

Few of my readers will be so far away from music that sometime they might not hear a thoroughly good concert if they would go without a ribbon or two for the sake of it. Only the musical will get the full meaning of music; but all of us have a deep need of all we can get, and something is within the reach of every one who longs for it.

Some years ago, when in England, an attractive American girl said to me, with a mortified air, "I will never own it to the English, but it is true that we Americans have dreadful voices, just as they say we have. Only hear my sister's tone across this room!"

Now we must admit that few of us have really sweet voices; and yet if we love beauty, and especially beautiful music, we must wish to do what we can to make our voices musical. I have sometimes thought this was impossible unless we could have an exceptionally fine vocal teacher, and that is beyond the reach of most of us; but I have lately seen some very practical suggestions on this subject in a little book on "Our Mother Tongue" by Mr. Theodore Mead, which I am pretty sure would help any girl who would faithfully follow them.

Whether sweet voices are possible to us or not, it is in our power to cultivate gentle and pure speech. I doubt whether there is any more genuine accomplishment than this, or one which on the whole gives more refined pleasure to those about us, though it is not showy.

Clear enunciation and perfect but easy pronunciation are marks of a lady hardly to be mistaken. To reach this standard care and thought and practice are necessary. And there are many books to help us. Among the dictionaries we shall probably find "Worcester" most useful. "Our Mother Tongue," which I have already mentioned, contains in small compass more available information than any other book I am acquainted with. And as several girls in earnest can learn more than one can learn alone, I should like to suggest that some of you who are aware that your manner of speaking is not all you desire it to be should form a little club for improving not only your voices, but your pronunciation, and that you should begin by practising together from Mr. Mead's vocabulary.

When you become mistress of this accomplishment, you will be able to add something to the pleasure of many a friend who laughs at your paintings and votes your music a bore.

The love of flowers is a natural endowment of almost every girl. Their beauty is so simple and so common that no one need be shut out from it. If a woman studies botany, she learns to find a thousand delicate wild blossoms which she would not otherwise have seen. If she must stay at home, as so many women must, she can often have her own little garden, or at least a stand of

plants in her window, and by cultivating them actually bear her part in the creation of beauty. Few are too poor or too busy to miss altogether the gentle ministrations of flowers; but some women fail to catch the true spirit of them after all. I know a fine woman who is a botanist. She can give the scientific name of every flower in the county. She has an immense herbarium, and will —

> "prose
> O'er books of travelled seamen,
> And show you slips of all that grows
> From England to Van Diemen."

She is to me a very interesting woman; her knowledge is accurate and thorough, and her study has scientific value as well as being an innocent and healthful recreation. But I have never once heard her say of a flower, "How beautiful it is!" A friend of hers who knows nothing of botany cultivates a bright, sweet garden. The botanist is inclined to look down on the horticulturist and think she knows nothing of flowers. But is it not better to see their beauty than to know their names? Yet I have known a woman who successfully cultivated the most exquisite plants who said, "I would not have flowers at all if I could not have finer ones than any one else in the village." She did have finer ones than any one else in the village; but it is certain that she did not love their beauty, for then she must have wished every garden in the place to be fragrant with it.

The love of flowers is a part of the great love of Nature. Nature is freely given to all of us.

"June may be had by the poorest comer."

I do not believe there is any girl who will read these pages who has not felt the thrill of the spring woods or the autumn sunsets or the starry sky; but there are a great many girls who take very little time to look at these things. They sit over their crochet work when the twilight sky is flushed with rose and violet and the great planets are shedding their golden light through the veil of colour, and think it is provoking that it is growing dark. On the rocks by the seashore they read a flimsy novel. I am afraid most of us must remember beautiful scenes which we have made commonplace — and worse — by gossiping conversation. The trouble with us is not that we cannot feel beauty, nor that it is not lying all about us, but that we are not willing to choose it before the trivialities which interpose to hide it from us. I do not mean, of course, that we are not to laugh or talk in the open air;

"Is this a time to be gloomy and sad
When our Mother Nature laughs around?"

I do mean, that we ought to take the time to see the glory of the world, that we ought to rejoice that it is our duty to take the time to see it, and that we ought not to let our meaner selves obstruct our vision. Those of us who have time should take a walk every day, — not sim-

ply for the sake of our health, but expressly to see the wonderful sky and the wonderful earth. And who has not time? There are unhappy women crowded in city garrets, who must work for their lives, who can hardly lift their eyes to see the sunset shining in at their attic windows; but those of us who can read a book need not plead that we have no time to see beauty.

There is only one kind of reading which can illuminate our lives as Nature can, and that is poetry. I have spoken of that again and again. It seems to me so essential to any true development that I must speak of it in many different chapters. It is not enough to read poetry; we must learn it. If we are too dull to know what is beautiful ourselves, let us learn some great poem which others have told us is beautiful, and in learning it we shall think of it so much that we shall see the beauty. An easy rhyme has a danger, — we may catch the rhythm more quickly than the meaning. Some of the finest poetry is in the form of sonnets; and these are so difficult to memorize that we are sure to gain their secret in the effort.

To show you what I mean, I am going to copy here a familiar sonnet of Wordsworth which I do not think too difficult for most young girls, and ask if each of you who does not already know it will not learn it by heart.

"It is a beauteous evening, calm and free;
The holy time is quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;

The gentleness of heaven is on the sea.
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder everlastingly.
Dear child! dear girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear'st untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine.
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worshipp'st at the temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not."

If you will learn this, I think you will feel as if you had a treasure of new beauty in your heart. I think you will be ready to give up some trivial occupation for a few minutes every day to learn poetry of this quality.

It is sometimes hard to find time for even noble work without neglecting still more imperative duties. But one reason we who are older now find it so hard to get time for what is so well worth doing is that when we were girls and might have chosen the best, we did not put the right emphasis on our various employments, and our lives became tangled almost past help. Perhaps some girl who sees a life of leisure before her may stop here and resolve to give a little time every day to poetry. If she does this, I should not be surprised to find that ten years later, in the stress of family cares or of business or of deeds of mercy, she should still find time for the daily crumb of beauty which will be essential to her life.

I know of a young girl growing up on a Western ranch, far away from people and from schools. Her life is a

busy one, full of the petty strains which come from ceaseless household drudgery. Her mother — a highly cultivated lady — has very little time to teach her children, the immediate needs of every day being so urgent. Yet she finds room for the best things. Every evening she and her little daughter sit by a western window and watch the sun set while the mother repeats the finest poetry and the child learns it from her lips. In this way they have committed to memory "Tintern Abbey," and they have learned how Nature can —

> "So impress
> With quietness and beauty, and so feed
> With lofty thoughts"

that not even so dreary and labourious a life as theirs "shall e'er prevail against" them.

Shakspeare and Milton and Chaucer and Burns are thus constantly in their hearts, and their life is far more poetic than that of most women whose homes are crowded with works of art, and whose daily occupations are in themselves beautiful.

Miss Lucy Larcom, whose lovely "New England Girlhood" I hope every girl will read, tells us that when she was working in a Lowell cotton factory at thirteen or fourteen years old, she obtained permission to tend some frames that stood directly in front of the windows looking off on the beautiful Merrimac River, and she made

her window-seat into a small library of poetry, pasting its sides all over with newspaper clippings. These she could look at and even learn by heart without interrupting her work.

It is not always best to combine work and study; but most girls who have much manual labour to do will find that some of it is so mechanical that their minds are free, and will be all the better for being filled with poetry. When rocking a cradle or knitting there is a mental breathing-space. I have known girls who pinned up a poem on the wall to learn while washing dishes, and some have even ironed plain clothes in a satisfactory manner with a book open before them on the table. A poem differs from other reading in this. It is not only unnecessary to read more than a line or two at a time, but it is usually better to think over one line a few minutes before going on to the next.

And now, at last, is it not better to love beauty and seek it for its own sake than to wish to appropriate it to ourselves as an accomplishment? If we have the gifts and the opportunities which make it possible for us to be accomplished, then our genuine love of beauty will make our accomplishments something more than a mere means of exhibiting ourselves, — they will be a blessing to everybody around us.

VIII.

HOW SHALL WE READ?

AURORA LEIGH says: —

> "We get no good
> By being ungenerous, even to a book,
> And calculating profits, — so much help
> By so much reading. It is rather when
> We gloriously forget ourselves, and plunge
> *Soul-forward*, headlong, into a book's profound,
> Impassioned for its beauty and salt of truth, —
> 'T is then we get the right good from a book."

Those of us who feel that reading has been the delight and blessing of our lives are ready to echo this outburst.

I am a little afraid, however, that when girls are left entirely to their own sweet will the books they plunge gloriously into are almost all stories. I like stories too well myself to find fault with this, and I think it would be wise for parents and guardians to scatter so many good stories in the pathway of an ardent girl that she would have no time left for trash. Still, as ice-cream would cloy the appetite if we began a meal with it, I believe it might be well for any girl to spend the first part of her leisure every day in reading for study rather

than merely for recreation, — that is, unless she has already done her full share of study in school. And if she is a bright girl and has any access to really worthy books, she will be sure to find herself plunging gloriously in before she has gone far.

An old lady tells me that when she was a young girl teaching her first school she was very indignant with one of the committee, who criticised her reading-class on the ground that no child should ever read a single word of which he could not give the definition. "Then they never would read anything," she replied, with spirit. I hope I shall not be thought superficial if I say my sympathies are all with her. To be always breaking the thread of one's thought to look up a word in the dictionary or to trace out a classical allusion seems to me enough to check any ordinary enthusiasm. As for words, by the time we have read the same word a dozen times in different connections we know its meaning far better than if we had halted painfully at its first appearance and looked for it in the dictionary.

One of the largest-minded men I ever knew once remarked in my hearing that he had advised his wife's little fifteen-year-old English maid-servant to read Herbert Spencer's "Education." "Do you think she can understand it?" I asked. "Not all of it," he replied. "That is the reason I gave it to her. She is a clever girl, and ought to make something of herself. It is

wholesome for her to find there are things beyond her comprehension."

I would not discourage any girl from looking up all the new words and all the classical allusions which she feels an earnest wish to understand; but I believe the best way to read is to take a paragraph, a chapter, and sometimes even a book as a whole first, and then return to it again and again till we have made it thoroughly our own. I suppose we look up definitions that we may better understand the author's meaning, so we do not wish to lose the drift of his argument in the attempt.

I once knew a conscientious young lady who undertook some difficult scientific reading. An elder friend had pursued the same course a year or two previously, and the two seldom met even in the street that the younger did not inquire into the meaning of some knotty paragraph which was barring her way. "Read on, and then come back to it," was always the laughing reply. At last, one day the younger said, "I verily believe you are right. When I can't understand a sentence, the next sentence usually explains it."

Who ever did understand anything beyond the primer at first reading? It is superficial to think you do; but if you have not the courage and perseverance to reread the first chapters of any book that is worth while in the light of the last chapters, then perhaps you are super-

ficial. In books and a few other things, the whole is greater than the sum of all its parts.

It is generally a good plan in studying a lesson to read it all first before beginning to learn it. The Harvard examination papers give the direction, "Read over a passage several times before attempting to write your translation." This saves time in the end.

Even a novel that treats life and character with any wisdom deserves rereading. If you lay it aside ten years and then come back to it, you find far more in it than at first, for your own experience and growth have opened your eyes; but even if you reread it at once, the development of character at the close teaches something new of the meaning of the first scenes.

All this is still truer of solid books. I have heard thoughtful people say, for instance, that Emerson has no dialectic. (Do not look up the meaning of "dialectic" just yet.) They say that every sentence is a gem, full of beauty and truth and power; that one of his essays is a collection of such jewels; but that there is no dominating thought in each to which every sentence contributes. This is not true; but it is not at the first reading that we find out it is not true. There is dialectic in every essay; but the closely packed jewels are so brilliant that each one absorbs our whole attention for the time, and we are too exhausted at the end of the chapter to recall so many thoughts and understand their bearing on each

other. But we take up the same essay the next day and the next, and at last we see the whole design. Even a young girl would find it well worth her while to do this with an essay or two, though I know I must not expect many girls to care deeply for Emerson till they are far beyond their teens, and I shall have no quarrel with them because their Scott and Dickens are so much dearer to them, for I love Scott and Dickens myself. And yet some of you find even Scott dull!

Here let me say that it is never best to give up altogether reading an author we know to be great even if we cannot understand him. Keep on reading a little at a time, at short intervals, and the light is sure to dawn gradually. Especially if a book contains an argument, we must try to look at it as a whole, before we can fully master details; but we need not do it all at once. Never work over any subject after your brain begins to be tired. Turn to something else till to-morrow, and then the crooked places will be made straight.

A great work usually has some message for all of us. I know a child of five years who already begins to love Shakspeare. Her mother has taken pains to read to her some of the fairy parts of the "Midsummer Night's Dream," arranging them in a connected story. When the child seems restless, the mother skips the long passages, and confines her reading simply to the story, but now she puts in a speech of Titania and again one of

Oberon, and explains as much of it as the child seems to enjoy. The mother does not read the "Midsummer Night's Dream" every day or every week to the child; but after a little interval, she asks, "Shall we have Titania again?" and the child thinks it is a treat. Moreover, the little one already goes about the house singing or reciting, "I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows," or "How now, spirit, whither wander you?" Suppose the mother had waited till the child could understand every word of the play before beginning to read it, do you think the child would ever have found the same charm in Puck and Bottom and Peasblossom and Mustard Seed?

I know a young girl who has an absorbing musical genius. She also has a rare power of appreciating fine poetry; but oddly enough, the other members of her family care only for music, so that she has been left to grow up without any training in literature; and not having formed the habit of reading she now reads very little and very slowly, her time and thoughts being given almost exclusively to her musical education. Yet I know no other girl who reads so satisfactorily. When she was about eighteen, she discovered that Shakspeare was meant for her. This is the way she makes acquaintance with a play. First she reads it through just as she has time and inclination, thinking over any passage that interests or puzzles her, and marking the lines that are so grand or

beautiful that she feels as if she must learn them. Then she looks up the history which may happen to be connected with the play. Occasionally she reads a criticism. Next she learns the lines she has marked. Afterwards she reads the whole play again. If she has a chance to see it on the stage, she reads it once more before going to the theatre, and still again after she has seen it. It usually takes her six or eight weeks to read a play, and she enjoys every moment of her reading. "If I am blue," she says, "I take up my Shakspeare, and forget my troubles."

I know another girl, who has lived among literary people all her life, who will read a sublime passage of Shakspeare aloud smoothly, and almost with feeling; and yet if you ask her at the end of it to tell you its substance, her ideas abont it prove to be hazy. Rapid readers are in danger of falling into this careless habit. If you are conscious of having such a habit, stop at the end of every paragraph and see if you know exactly what you have been reading about. Indeed you are one of the girls who probably need to look up every definition as they go along, for every check to the mere flow of words will help you to think, true as it is that whenever attention to mere words checks the flow of thought there is some danger of losing the best of the reading. Under some circumstances it is really worth while to look up your classical and Scriptural allusions, though I have

always firmly believed that the way to understand them was to read the classics and the Scriptures instead of using Lemprière's Dictionary or Cruden's Concordance. Of course we all wish to be accurate; and though we must not sacrifice the whole of a subject to its details, we must go in search of a great many irksome particulars.

It is often thought that accurate knowledge depends on one's intellectual and moral firmness, and certainly it does have to do with character. Nevertheless it is frequently a matter of access to books. We do not all have the "Encyclopædia Britannica" at our elbow, even when we are quite willing to take the trouble to look up a doubtful question. We do all need a well-equipped private library if our reading is to go very deep. Public libraries are a great blessing, but I am afraid they tempt us to spend some of the money in bonbons which we ought rightfully to spend in books. Free school text-books have the same tendency. They were introduced in Massachusetts with the best intentions, but I have always felt that they defrauded all but the very poor of their right to own their school-books. A young lady forgets a date in history. She knows exactly where to find it in the text-book she used in school, and if she owns the book she refers to it and remembers the date ever after. But if she must spend an hour in a public library looking up the matter, the chances are

she never does it, and is always at a loss. Of course we are still free to buy our text-books, but when our purse is light the temptation is strong to make use of those provided.

Most of us cannot buy many books, but it is worth while to buy as many as we can. We all want an unabridged dictionary and an encyclopædia and a few books of reference; still, if we must choose, do we not need Shakspeare even more than a dictionary, and do not most of us get more help in noble living from the pages of George Eliot than from an encyclopædia?

Whenever you buy a book, buy one that means something to you, even if it is a novel or a child's story.

For what is the object of reading?

Is it not that we may enter into the best thoughts of the men and women of all time and be helped by them to our own best and fullest life? Now all writers do not help all readers. Of course a book must be genuine to help anybody; but the child or the undeveloped man or woman may sometimes be best reached by simple books which are too elementary to be even glanced at by those who have reached a higher stage of culture. I myself was brought up on the Rollo books and Miss Edgeworth's stories, and retain a fondness for them to this day. But I had a schoolmate — a girl of genius — who laughed to scorn the idea that any child could be interested in such every-day philoso-

phy as these works contain. She said that she would rather by half have read Jonathan Edwards "On the Affections" when she was a child, and I remember feeling quite ashamed of my commonplace tastes. Now, however, I am very glad that since I was not a genius, my parents provided Abbot and Miss Edgeworth for me instead of Edwards.

Though none of us can afford to be careless in any of our reading, it has always seemed to me right that there should be a great difference between reading for study and for recreation. Some teachers say that if a girl wishes to read a novel when she is studying the reign of Elizabeth, it will be as much recreation for her to read "Kenilworth" as any other novel. But that depends upon whether she chooses the book herself. Recreation implies freedom. It is a good thing to read "Kenilworth" when studying the reign of Elizabeth. Most of us get our first vivid ideas of English history from Scott and Shakspeare. But if a tired girl thought a novel would rest her, and saw both "Kenilworth" and "John Halifax" lying on the table, and knew that of the two she must take "Kenilworth," even if she liked it as well as "John Halifax" she would have a feeling of restraint sure to tell on her nerves at last; and she would not only get no relaxation from her reading, but it is doubtful whether she would learn as much by dwelling on one subject all the time. By

looking long at a colour the eye becomes fatigued, and it is refreshing to see another. I once visited an asylum for the feeble-minded where the children were taught to read by means of words printed in large letters on strips of pasteboard. A teacher who was trying to instruct a beginner held in her hand two strips, one with the word "eye" upon it, and the other with the word "blackboard." "Why do you use such different words?" I asked. "Because it is so much easier for a child to distinguish words which do not look alike," she replied.

Even if from the educational point of view it were best to pursue one subject to the bitter end, there would be no recreation in such reading. Play ought to be play, and should not be haunted by a sense of duty. But as rough or cruel play can never be allowed, so silly and bad books cannot be tolerated. Wise parents put so many good books in the way of their children that the taste for them is formed unconsciously, and there is never any feeling of restraint. But some girls must form their own taste, and if they are in earnest, it will not take them very long to banish all wish for worthless literature, though perhaps for a few months recreation will not be entirely recreation.

IX.

WHAT SHALL WE READ?

I WONDER if any girls may wish that I would give them a few suggestions as to the books they should read. I cannot lay down a course of reading because that should vary with the needs of each girl. Still, in almost every chapter of this volume I have had occasion to refer to some book or other which might give help in some direction; and by the time you have read these books, you will perhaps be able to judge for yourself what you most require. What I have to say here is more general.

First, let us talk a little about novels. It is not altogether because girls are superficial that they crave so much of such food; but partly because they rightly have a greater interest in life than in knowledge, and partly because a story makes so many obscure things clear. Some people must have everything in the form of a story if they are to understand it at all.

Yet many of the greatest novels are ill-adapted to girls. In the first place, girls ought to know the good in

the world before they learn much of its evil, and in the second place they cannot really appreciate a novel which deals with the passions and temptations of older people till they have had some experience themselves. Any great novel requires and deserves study. Those who read it in girlhood must read it later in life also. Unless they do this, it is a greater loss in the development of mind and character to read a great novel prematurely than to try to master a work on science or language for which they are unprepared.

Then, moreover, the coarseness girls are so carefully guarded from in books and in society does not really hurt them as much as worldliness. Girlhood is not the time for any novelist who does not believe that something besides the actual is possible and necessary. Whatever Dickens's faults may be, he can be trusted here, and I never knew a girl who loved Dickens who was not large-hearted. If a girl appreciates Thackeray, "The Newcomes" is a better book for her to read than "Vanity Fair." Scott is one of the masters always to be trusted to present a natural world which is nevertheless rosy with the light of romance.

There are half a dozen fresh, sweet story-writers girls are always the better for reading, — Mrs. Mulock-Craik, Mrs. Whitney, Miss Thackeray, Miss Yonge, Miss Alcott, Black. Many a girl in a rough and poor home learns how to be a gentlewoman from constant association with

their gentle heroines. Girls in every grade of society except the highest get as many of their ideas of manners from novels as from people. Every girl may have noble society in books. Faith Gartney, and Leslie Goldthwaite, and the March girls in "Little Women," and "D dear" in "Off the Skelligs," and all Miss Mulock's dear girls, and Florence Dombey, and the Agnes of "David Copperfield," and Lily Dale and her sister Bell in Trollope's "Small House at Allington" (though Trollope has a worldly touch, and I do not wonder that his fine humour seldom appeals to a girl), and Ethel Newcome, and Jeanie Deans, and Maggie with her cousin, little Lucy, in the "Mill on the Floss," and the Dorothea of "Middlemarch" are always ready to be her friends.

A girl ought to make the acquaintance of George Eliot's fine heroines while she is still a girl, but she must not think she can read George Eliot's novels once for all while she is in her teens. They must be studied for new meanings at every stage of life, just as Shakspeare's plays must be.

School-girls do not have much time for solid reading beyond that prescribed by their teachers, and the thousands of girls who must earn their living as soon as they leave school have still less time; but I hope that all who can spare an hour a day for reading will spend part of it on solid books. If we have a great deal of leisure, most

of our reading should take the form of study. We may for instance make ourselves at home in epoch after epoch of history, or we may study one science after another in something better than the school-girl fashion. With less leisure, we may still read to some purpose by spending a good many months on one subject. I once heard a lady say, "My daughter and I have spent the whole winter in Greece." She meant that they had read Greek history and Greek poetry and Greek philosophy, and had looked at reproductions of Greek art, though they had hardly been away from their own chimney-corner.

Now there are thousands of books worth reading, and nobody can read them all. There have been many admirable essays written on the choice of books. Emerson's essay on "Books" in the volume "Society and Solitude" gives a splendid list of the great books of the world. Many of these works are far beyond the powers of young girls. I will not try to add to such a catalogue; but there are a few suggestions I wish earnestly to make. One is that each reader should be guided by her natural powers in choosing what to read. I do not mean that we should read carelessly whatever strikes our fancy at the moment; but as all of us who are honest with ourselves know what are our best gifts and our worst faults, that we should choose the subjects and the books which will develop our powers and correct our faults.

For instance, if we love the Greeks and hate the Romans, while we are indifferent to the Egyptians, let us by all means make a thorough study of the Greeks, so that our zeal may be according to knowledge; but let us make a thorough study of the Romans too, so that we may know whether our ill-will is due to their character or our own. Perhaps the study will show us some personal weaknesses which especially need treatment. We can put off reading about the Egyptians to a later date. Or, if we love philosophy and hate science, or *vice versa*, the same rule holds.

But whatever our tastes or talents, there are two kinds of reading essential for all, for men as well as women, for old as well as young. Of course you know that one of these is poetry. Sooner or later we must all know Shakspeare and Milton, Dante and Homer, and parts of Goethe by heart. These great poets rank with the Bible and with the bibles of other races in their influence upon us. And we cannot spare the lesser poets either. Girls especially, to whom the "Divine Comedy" or "Faust" sometimes seem so remote as to be sealed books, can find the most wholesome nutriment in Chaucer and Cowper and Burns, in Whittier and Longfellow and Lowell, in Mrs. Browning and Keats and Tennyson. Most of us have to wait till past girlhood, I am afraid, to understand Wordsworth; and Browning, though he is worth the effort, taxes the greatest of our mature powers.

Poetry cannot be translated, and yet the women who do not read Greek cannot afford to miss what even a translation can give of Æschylus and Sophocles and Euripides. The characters in their dramas and the high thought and action cannot be disguised even in the prose of another language.

But after all, in poetry itself *what* we read is not the important thing. We should read poetry to give us a certain attitude of mind, a habit of thinking of noble things, of keeping our spirit in harmony with beauty and goodness and strength and love, that —

> "All
> The dreary intercourse of daily life
> Shall [not] prevail against us."

"Poetry *is* the fact," says Matthew Arnold, in his wonderful essay at the beginning of Ward's "English Poets."

The other kind of reading which is essential is the news! This is not because we need to know the daily gossip of the whole world to save ourselves from daily mortification on account of our ignorance, but for a very different reason. The great object of our reading is to keep our mind in a certain state. Now, if we should read nothing but great poetry, we should lose touch with common, every-day life about us, and with all our fine thoughts, we might grow weak and selfish. We want to know how the whole world is living and acting. If we are to help to make it better, we must know its sorrows, its

faults, even its crimes. How could we help anybody if we only gathered up our own robes out of the mire our fellow-creatures have fallen into? That kind of virtue is so weak that it is almost sure to give way in the moment of pressure. Of course I do not mean that we want to spend much time every day over a newspaper. A newspaper almost always dissipates the mind. That is the reason I cannot look with favour on Sunday papers. We ought to save Sunday for the higher life.

"Sundays the pillars are,
On which heav'n's palace archèd lies."

"The week were dark, but for thy light;
Thy torch doth show the way."

There is a passage in Bryce's "American Commonwealth" in which he speaks of the attitude of mind produced by reading newspapers. He says that even if a newspaper contains a great essay or poem, scarcely any reader gets the full value of the fine thought because his mind is not adjusted to receive it. He is hurrying through the paper as fast as he can with the purpose of getting at facts, not thoughts. This would be a sufficient reason for not spending much time over newspapers, even if there were no other; and I should be very sorry if American women should ever form the habit, which is becoming so pernicious among American men, of depending on newspapers for their chief mental food. There is not very much danger of this at present. Girls at

least, not caring much for business or politics, find newspapers very dull. There is more danger that they will spend so much time over the lighter magazines, where information and thought are served up piecemeal, that they will have no time or strength for reading of value. Nevertheless, a girl who wishes to develop into a well-balanced woman must supplement her reading of great poetry with a little reading of a dry newspaper. I think a weekly paper much better for a girl just beginning to read newspapers than a daily. She will then get the important news without wasting her time over trash; and when at last her interests become so wide that she needs a daily paper, she will know how to discriminate between what she wants to read and what she wants to skip.

X.

TRAVEL.

TRAVELLING is delightful. Even when it is fatiguing, it is, as somebody says, "delightful to have travelled." And as a means of gaining information it is unsurpassed. Dr. Edward Everett Hale tells us that this is the way to "realize our geography." It is the way to realize other things, too. Not long ago, a young girl told me she had heard a sermon in which the clergyman declared that he should like to look back at the end of his life, and feel that every year he had seen something more of God's beautiful world; and that accordingly her father had decided to take the whole family for a trip across the continent, to visit the Rocky Mountains, the Yosemite Valley, and the Yellowstone Park. Beauty is all around us to be sure, but the new vision does often mean more to us than the old one. After all, the real value of travelling depends on the fact that we change our point of view. A fine woman, who went from the East to make her home in St. Louis some thirty years ago, when communication between different parts of the country was not so com-

plete as now, said, "I felt that this change of home tested me in every point. All my habits of life were changed, and all the people I saw had different standards from those at the East. I have had to decide what was essential and what merely superficial in both manners and creed."

But we must have a definite point of view before it will be of any use to go in search of a new standpoint. We need to learn a great deal about the place where we are born before it will be much more than dissipation to travel. It always seems to me something of a misfortune for a little child to be dragged over Europe, though it is true enough that such a child does learn far more of places and people than he could at home; and if the end of education is to speak French and German fluently, it is necessary that the child should spend much time in France and Germany when very young.

Travel is a great quickener in education, but it is not the foundation of it. What does the Tower of London mean to one who knows nothing of English history, or Loch Katrine to one who reads the "Lady of the Lake" for the first time in connection with the guide-book?

I am glad to notice that so many fathers and mothers with abundant means now seem to realize the importance of having their children thoroughly trained at school and in college before sending them abroad even to study. Then they are all ready to see and understand with enthusiasm.

The mood in which one takes a journey is of importance. It is not often in a large party that all are in the right mood. One is ill, and thinks only of her digestion. Another has been hurried abroad to break off an unfortunate love affair, etc. I know a delightful young girl who is putting off a European trip for almost a year, because she says solemnly that nothing shall be allowed to interfere with class-day at Harvard next June! Nevertheless, whatever the mood, new sights and sounds do take us so effectually out of ourselves, that even the dyspeptics and the unhappy usually come back from an extended tour with invigorated bodies and minds.

If we had all the leisure and money we wanted, it certainly would not be best to travel all the time. So many different standpoints would only reduce our mental condition to that of a kaleidoscope. The ideal plan would, I think, be an outing of perhaps one month in every twelve, and a long European or South American or Asiatic tour about one year in five. Europe ought to be seen, at least for the first time, within a few years after leaving school, in order that the stimulus it gives us in the study of art and history and literature should be received early enough to be a distinct influence in the choice of our studies of a life-time.

So few of us have either the leisure or the money to do as we please, however, that perhaps it is hardly best to consider any ideal which depends on these alone. We must

take our journeys whenever we can, and few of us suffer from a surfeit of travelling. Sometimes it is even necessary that travel should be the chief means of education. I know a family of girls who travelled from the time they were eight or ten years old till they were past the school age, first in America, then in Europe and the East. Their father's business was such that there was no alternative. But the father and mother were educated people who knew what to see; and they had definite principles which made it possible to give their daughters fixed habits in spite of their constantly changing surroundings. So the girls are well-educated. They studied Roman history in Rome, and Greek history in Greece, and art in the galleries of Florence and Dresden and Paris. They read Coleridge and Shelley in the Vale of Chamounix, and Burns at the Bridge of Doon, and Shakspeare everywhere. They acquired the modern languages almost without knowing it. In climbing the great pyramid, they learned more of Egypt than most of us ever know. They reread their Bible carefully in the East. Without the strong hand of the father and mother these girls would probably have received merely a succession of pleasant impressions; but their parents taught them how to compare one country or people or language with another, and they were saved from superficiality.

Though most of us would not be the better for such continual travel, we all need to change the point of

view from time to time; and few of us are so unfortunate that we cannot sometimes do so, if we realize that it is important. A lady once said to me, "When I found that my home in the country must be broken up and that I must come to the city and earn my living, I could not bear to think of the change. But now I rejoice in it. I was as narrow as a crack before I came, for everything went on always in the same placid routine."

I had a friend to whose lot it fell to teach fourteen or fifteen years in one school. She did not however grow narrow or opinionated. "I get my variety," she used to say, with a smile, "in changing boarding-places!" She was not a fussy boarder; but some cause or other usually made it necessary to change once in two or three years, and she was rather glad of it, because this gave her a new aspect of life. Some people would have lamented their hard fate without trying to see what they could get from their experience.

"To make daily a new estimate, that is greatness," says Emerson. If we are wise, a fresh set of circumstances will help us to make a new estimate. This is what travel does for us if we do not travel too frequently.

I have always liked the German plan for girls. A country girl, at sixteen or seventeen, is sent to live in the family of some friend in the city, and a city girl is sent in the same way into the country. These girls are to be taught housekeeping. They pay no board and receive no

wages, but do what they are told. They are treated as daughters of the family, and they learn not only housekeeping but new modes of life.

And now a few words as to how we shall travel. What do we want to see in foreign lands? I knew a young lady who on her return from Europe could tell you what she had had to eat in every hotel. She is not necessarily to be condemned. If Mrs. Lincoln or Miss Corson travel I have no doubt they can also tell what they have to eat; and they will know it so accurately that they will be able to show weary housekeepers all over the world how to vary their monotonous bill-of-fare by new and dainty dishes. But at the same time Mrs. Lincoln at least, and Miss Corson I dare say, will be able to tell you about the English Cathedrals, or the palace of Versailles. At all events, these ladies will pay attention to their bill-of-fare for a purpose, and not because their whole mind is set on what they have to eat.

Of course we cannot all see exactly the same sights. Each of us is educated to the point of seeing some things, but not all things. Let us, however, be sure to look for the best we can see. One of my friends quotes a friend of hers as saying that Europe seemed to him a network of railways, leading from one great picture-gallery to another. Only a cultivated person could think of Europe in that way. But I know a highly cultivated lady, and one who loves art, too, who says that the

absorbing interest which Europe or any other country has for her is in the people she sees. She loves the whole human family, and likes to observe how the environment modifies the essential characteristics of each member of it.

At least let us not spend our time when travelling in looking at things we can see equally well at home. I saw an English girl who was making her first trip up the Rhine reading a novel all the way in spite of the anxiety of her papa, who tried to call her attention to one point of beauty after another. The novel may have been a good one, but that was not the place to read it.

I once had only a few hours for a drive from Melrose to Abbotsford. Knowing that every inch of the ground must be rich in associations with Scott's novels and poetry, I asked the driver to point out everything of interest as we drove along. He was a good-natured fellow and showed the greatest wish to please me. Every minute or two he turned round with some remark for my instruction. "This," he would say, impressively, "is the new National Schoolhouse;" "this is the Dissenting Chapel," and so on and so on.

If we do not know what we want to see before we set out on our travels, we shall miss much of the best which lies in our pathway. If our previous education has not been broad we cannot see all we would; but I think there are two things always to be looked for, and that if

we look for these, our travelling will not be in vain. One is beauty, — either of nature or of art; especially of art, perhaps, because nature is as beautiful at home as abroad. The other is the present and past life of other nations, for this teaches us our own relation to other people, and shows us what is essential in our own ideals. For either of these two objects a trip to Europe is better than a journey to San Francisco. We sometimes hear people say with a meritorious air that they should not be willing to go to Europe till they had seen their own country thoroughly. This has a conscientious sound, but is based I think on a misconception of the purpose of travel. It is true we must learn to know our own home before going away from it, for there our duties begin. Our home gives us the type of life with which all other types are to be compared. But when we go away from home, we want most to see the highest civilization and the most perfect art, so that England and Italy are a better stimulus for us than California and Alaska. I am glad that some of my friends can see Sitka as well as Rome; but those of us whose leisure and money are limited enrich our lives more by visiting Rome than Sitka, and as to expense, I believe it really costs less.

One word may not be out of place in reference to the temper we carry with us on our journeyings. A friend who travelled through the East with a large party told me that sometimes the fatigue of riding on horseback or

on a camel was so great that she thought she could not possibly keep up with the rest; but that she nerved herself to go on, for she always wondered whether, in case she should fall by the wayside, any one of that eager company could spare time to stop and help her.

On the other hand, I remember an incident which came to my notice in Rome. Two sisters had arranged to go to St. Peter's for a special Easter service. They had always longed to hear that one service in that one spot, and now the opportunity of their lifetime had come. A lady staying at the same hotel, hearing them make their plan, asked to join them, fancying she too would like to hear the music, though it was not a matter of enough interest to her to have led her to make an independent plan. She was, moreover, rather out of health, so that she was very likely to break down in the midst of any excursion. For these reasons, the sisters were sorry she had proposed going with them, though they were too kind to refuse her request. She delayed them by her elaborate preparations, and I thought the elder sister quite justified in saying decisively to her that they would not wait five minutes longer. As it was they did not reach the church till just as the service was beginning, and at that moment, the self-invited guest was taken ill. The younger sister turned pale with disappointment when it proved that the guest could neither go on nor be left alone. "You must stay," said the

elder sister, without an instant's hesitation. "She does not need us both. I will go back to the hotel with her." "But you will miss the service," pleaded the younger sister, with tears in her eyes. "Yes," said the elder, serenely; "but after all, what are we in the world for but to make the best of it for everybody?" So she missed the fulfilment of the dream of a lifetime, but she did not miss something far better. You see she did not weakly indulge the guest when the latter's carelessness seemed likely to destroy the arrangement for the morning; but when her own cherished plan was interrupted by the misfortune of another she did not waste a moment in unavailing regret, but promptly gave up her own wishes; and I am not aware that she ever referred to the matter again with any irritation.

Some of us must stay at home. We never have time or money or opportunity to travel. How can we get the best of travel without the fact?

By enlarging our mental horizon. The study of botany or of entomology, or still more of field geology, will often change the face of a familiar landscape so much that we shall not need to travel a thousand miles to see a new earth. Miss Jewett in a wholesome little book for girls called "Betty Leicester" tells us how a thorough study of the history of the town we live in will give us the key to the history of the whole country. If we do

not see new nations, we can at least try to understand the people in our own village; and when we do this sympathetically, we may learn as much from the Irish or German or French families in our neighborhood as if we lived a few weeks in a hotel in Dublin or Berlin or Paris. And if our eyes are open to beauty, there is no waste place so desolate that we may not see the glory of a fresh sunrise and a fresh sunset every day.

XI.

THE CULTIVATION OF A SENSE OF HUMOUR.

"MY dear," said a gentleman to his wife, runs an old anecdote, "you would n't see a joke if it were fired at you out of an 11-inch Dahlgren." "Oh, my dear," responded the wife, "you know they don't fire jokes out of guns!"

It does really seem like a piece of presumption to suppose that one may cultivate a sense of humour. We all know that a sense of humour is absolutely indispensable to lubricate the wheels of life, and we feel that it is a special blessing of Heaven to be endowed with it; but who can dare to think of cultivating it?

Perhaps if, as Emerson suggests, we could be generous with our dignity as well as with our money, we might find our perception of humour increasing. If we were willing to laugh at a joke against ourselves, should we not establish humour on a partially ethical basis? And everybody knows that ethics can be cultivated.

Nothing so often saves us from being ridiculous as a sense of humour; and on the other hand, nothing comforts us so much when we are ridiculous.

Brothers are of inestimable value in cultivating a girl's sense of humour. They see all her little foibles, and have no false sensitiveness about presenting them in the most picturesque and striking fashion for her contemplation. Most girls cry freely under this discipline, but that is not the way to cultivate a sense of humour. We ought to be grateful to our brothers for making us so ridiculous in private that we know better than to indulge in our sentimental airs and graces in public, which would make us ridiculous before a hard-hearted audience. We ought to encourage our brothers and laugh with them, especially when the laugh is against ourselves. The fact is, we always laugh kindly at ourselves. Now, if our perception of humour grows in this fashion, it is sure to remain kindly when we trust ourselves to laugh at other people, for we know exactly how they feel, and make the same excuses for their absurdities which we have had so much practice in making for our own.

I fancy reading the genuine humourists, like Lamb and Dickens, will keep us more alive to the sweetly amusing side of things.

But on the whole I think our best personal contribution to our education in humour is in making a distinct effort to see the funny side of the petty annoyances which cause half the trouble of life. Such efforts will never be thrown away even if we do not succeed in finding out whether jokes are fired from guns or not, because we

shall be so much better women in consequence. I remember the heroine of a novel, who when there was nothing but bread for dinner cut it up in half a dozen different ways and pretended to serve it in courses, — soup, fish, roast, and so on. No doubt the bread actually digested better for the playful subterfuge.

"All my silver was stolen last week," said a lady, gayly; "but it is great fun to use pewter. You can always pretend that the reason the dinner is poor is because it tastes of the pewter, and not because it is burnt or underdone or heavy."

It is a saving grace to be able and willing to make small jokes. "I love and admire Miss Seaver," said a young lady, "but I am afraid of her; I should never dare to make a poor joke before her."

I have often thought we were all too much afraid of laughing at poor jokes. It is true we do not wish to laugh at coarse ones. But we are too severe on weak ones. Let us honour the good intention and the gentle hope of pleasing which leads to their manufacture, and pay them the tribute of a smile.

"I have often respected you," said one lady to another who sat at the same boarding-house table, "when I have observed the persistent good-nature with which you smile at every inane joke of those silly college boys."

"Oh, well, you know the boys are trying to be agreeable," was the reply. "I can't bear to hurt their feelings."

No one can be witty who is not born to be; but I am half inclined to believe that the sense of humour belongs to character, and may be cultivated. It requires quick observation, but it also requires gentleness and kindliness and wholesomeness. Now, to be wholesomely alive to the amusing side of our daily irritations, we must be well. When we are ill or tired or worn, every annoyance annoys too much. We cannot look beneath it for a joke, — though I do remember several delightful invalids who made their sick-rooms sweet with laughter; but they had a genius for humour, and were exceptions which prove the rule. Therefore as a final suggestion for the cultivation of a sense of humour I present this, —

Do your best to be perfectly well at all times both in body and mind.

XII.

DULL GIRLS.

THERE is not so much difference as many people think between bright girls and dull ones.

As there are all grades of dulness I hope that girls who are sure they are bright will not skip this chapter, especially as some of my remarks will apply to those who are limited in time or money as well as in intellect. Whether we are dull or bright, we wish to make of ourselves all that can be made of the stuff.

It is not best to malign the stuff given us to work up into a worthy fabric. Do not allow yourselves to think you are duller than you are. If you cannot do one thing, you can do another. I knew a girl who could not learn arithmetic, but she led her class in botany. I remember a boy who could not pass the college examinations in Latin, who yet became a distinguished physician. So, if you think you are dull, take special pains to find out what your gift is, and cultivate that. Some of you have beauty or grace or good-temper. Suppose you make the most of these things. Even beauty can be

used for something better than the gratification of vanity. For instance, a beautiful woman can often make a needed reform in dress attractive when a plain one would perhaps make it absurd. Some of you, however, may be plain and awkward as well as dull. Perhaps you may still have money or other opportunities which render your part in the world as important as that of those who have greater personal gifts. The first law for every dull girl, and indeed for all of us, is this: —

Do not spend your time in mourning for the gifts which were not given to you, but in learning how to use those you have received.

No doubt, however, any dull girl who takes the trouble to read a volume on self-culture has already the first essential of culture, — teachableness.

I remember an amiable girl at school who worked over her books from morning till night, but who could never learn her lessons. I heard one of her most patient and sympathetic teachers say of her, "I should not like to try so hard for nothing." Now if we hope for any result from our hard work, we must attempt to understand what we can do.

How are you dull? Have you a poor memory, or are you wanting in the power of reasoning about things which do not interest you?

It is pleasant and convenient to have a good memory, but we need not be ashamed if it was not given to us.

I hope you all remember that Columbus discovered America — though that has been disputed — and that Milton wrote "Paradise Lost." But if in spite of faithful study you cannot remember these things, you may be sure they are of no importance to you, however valuable to others. Some persons have the power of always making any fact they do not know seem not worth the knowing. "I take a certain pride," I once heard a young girl say, "in *not* having read all the new books." I suppose she meant that she had more important things to do. Though she was not a learned young lady, she had a fine, forcible character, unfailing amiability, and a delightful sense of humour. All her time was well spent, and all her conversation was entertaining. Why then should she think it was necessary to read all the new books? Wisdom is always better than learning. Still, if a studious girl grows up without being able to remember who wrote "Paradise Lost" — which we will let stand for all the every-day facts most people blush to be ignorant of — it is certain that something is wrong in her education. Probably she has tried to learn who wrote too many books. A dull girl must not waste her energies on too many subjects.

There are certain things everybody is expected to know, and though it is not necessary you should know them all — and indeed most bright women do not know them all — yet it would be a good plan to spend your

strength over these rather than over other things. I am tempted to make out a little course of study for girls who know they are dull, and perhaps it will do for those who are hampered in other ways.

I. You want to read easily and intelligently; and —

II. To write plainly and neatly.

III. I have a word to say about spelling. I once knew an idiot girl who could spell such words as Cincinnati and Himalaya backwards as well as forwards. On the other hand, one of the most cultivated women I have ever seen tells me that when she was a girl her father made her a present of two dictionaries, one to be kept upstairs and the other downstairs. "For, my dear," he said, "I do not wish to see so much bad spelling in your letters, and now you will have no excuse for not looking up every word you are in doubt about." In the polite world, an ill-spelled letter does carry disgrace with it; but if you are not a natural speller, I think it might be as well to buy the dictionaries.

IV. Mathematics. Every girl needs a thorough knowledge of mental arithmetic, as set forth in such a little book as that of Warren Colburn, — the power to add, subtract, multiply, and divide large numbers easily, and to be accurate in keeping accounts. Most school-girls study mathematics for eight or nine years, and there are few who could not master the subjects I have mentioned if they would give all the time they have to spend on mathe-

matics to this rudimentary work. Most girls could do more; and I, at least, rejoice whenever one can go on to higher and higher branches till, like Philippa Fawcett, she carries all the prizes away from the University students. The important point, however, is to do the essential work first, and then we need not be troubled if there is no time left for anything more.

V. Languages. The very dullest girls have a right to give all their energies to learning to speak and write English clearly and correctly. It is also worth while to try to use the exact word to express the thought. The grade just above this may study one other language. French will probably be most available, as it is not hard to translate. A dull girl who has special advantages may perhaps learn still other languages, but it is not generally best.

It is the privilege of dull girls and busy girls and delicate girls to read translations without compunction. They are not obliged to feel that they might do something better. Of course they can never appreciate the Iliad as well as if they understood Greek, but they can get a great deal that is of value from a translation. Dorothea, in "Middlemarch," is grieved because learned men get "so worn out on the way to great thoughts that they have no power left to enjoy them." A dull girl has a right to begin with great thoughts.

VI. Science. A dull girl need not try to learn much

of more than one science. She may choose the one she likes best and begin with the simplest book. For instance if she studies botany, Gray's little volume "How Plants Grow" will give her a delightful introduction to the subject without obliging her to learn many hard words. Now, a clever girl must analyze her flowers by the most complete manual she can buy, but a dull girl has a perfect right to the easiest.

VII. History. *Every girl who lives in the United States must know something of its history.* A dull girl need not be ambitious to read through extensive treatises. Suppose she takes a very little book and an entertaining one, — such an one as that by T. W. Higginson, for instance, — and learns it thoroughly. If she cannot do that in one year, perhaps she can in two years; or if not in two, then in three. By that time she will have a foundation for reading United States history, and I should not be surprised if all through her life she should read entertaining books of history with real zest. I do not say that even then her education in history will not be superficial, and yet I think it quite probable that it will go as deep as that of the majority of her bright acquaintances.

Some simple history of England, Greece, Rome, France, and Germany must follow. But a dull girl can allow herself three or four years for each country. It is not necessary that she should get her whole education in school. Dickens's "Child's History of England" is a

good illustration of the kind of book I mean. That gives the currently received facts of English history in a very agreeable form. No doubt an accurate scholar finds many mistakes in it; but it certainly will do more than many a greater work to give a dull girl a preliminary knowledge of England.

A dull girl must have entertaining books to read. By virtue of her dulness she is allowed to study only the most interesting things in the most interesting way. A dull mind cannot digest a dull book, no matter how admirable it is. So, in spite of the inaccuracies which are charged to the series of fascinating little biographies by the Abbotts, I think they are still well worth reading by any dull girl (as well as by a good many people who are not dull) who wants to have a general knowledge of history. Miss Strickland's "Queens of England" is another book which will hold the attention like a novel.

In these days of historical research, however, more recent books are likely to be more correct. And some late biographies are entertaining. Perhaps, for instance, some of those included by Macmillan & Co. in their "English Men of Action" series, by Dodd, Mead, & Co. in their "Makers of America" series, and by Houghton, Mifflin, & Co. in their "American Statesmen" series may not be beyond the powers of dull girls. Very likely, however, a dull girl can learn history better from stories. Many a girl knows the facts of the Reformation from Mrs.

Charles's charming "Schönberg-Cotta Family," who would otherwise be quite ignorant of that epoch.

Of course a bright girl must have accurate knowledge, but a dull girl has not always the choice. She can only assimilate the kind of knowledge that belongs to her.

VIII. Geography. Other countries and people form so important a subject of conversation in every civilized community that a girl ignorant of geography is oftener put to shame than if she were deficient in science or arithmetic. Moreover there are so many delightful volumes of travel that nothing is easier than to learn something of geography by reading them, especially if one has the perseverance to look out the places mentioned on a map. This seems to me a peculiarly suitable kind of reading for dull girls. Though they are to be excused from reading dull books, they want to read useful books; and though it is not their duty to study works beyond their capacity, that does not mean that they are to be excused from painstaking work within their power, such as the drudgery of looking out places on a map.

IX. Literature. The dullest girl can afford to neglect language, science, history, and even mental arithmetic better than she can afford to neglect literature. Every one ought to read a few of the best books. *Every one who speaks the English language must know something of Shakspeare.* I have often seen dull girls glow with enthusiasm over the "Merchant of Venice," which is one

of the best plays to begin with. A girl who has read a dozen plays thoroughly has a very good literary foundation. These should not be first read — at all events by a stupid girl — in the order of their greatness, and yet her strength should be given as far as possible to the greater plays. I will here suggest a good order for reading a dozen of the best ones: —

1. The Merchant of Venice. 2. Julius Cæsar. 3. Macbeth. 4. A Midsummer Night's Dream. 5. Henry VIII. 6. King Lear. 7. The Tempest. 8. King John. 9. Romeo and Juliet. 10. As You Like It. 11. Hamlet. 12. Othello.

You can well afford to be half a dozen years in reading these few plays. Only when you do read them, be sure to give your freshest and best attention to them. When you are familiar with them all, you will probably want to add to the list Henry IV. and Henry V., Winter's Tale, Cymbeline, and Richard III.; and very likely you will go on adding to the list all your life. But remember that it is not essential that you should read all Shakspeare's plays, and that you should never expect to exhaust all the meaning of a single one. The important point is that you should have the elevation of mind which comes from association with such a poet as Shakspeare.

Other poets you may read as you have time and inclination; but I hope Milton will be one of them. At

all events, let a large part of the energy you give to real study be given to the best poetry.

Much of your other reading will inevitably be novels. If you are very dull, even novels that are valuable may be hard reading. Scott is considered solid food by some girls. If that is the case with you, do not be ashamed to confess it. If Scott requires study, he is also worth study, and so are all the great novelists. For recreation, you can always read some of the simple and sweet story-tellers. You need not even despise children's books. Many of us middle-aged people of average brightness find pleasure and rest and even instruction in good children's books. You cannot afford to spend any time over poor books; but if you steadily read good and interesting novels as well as good and interesting children's books, you will both enjoy your reading, and you will in the end have a kind of education which though not great will rest on solid foundations, — for every good novel and every worthy book for children depends for its value on the understanding the writer has of life and character, while an entertaining book is usually full of allusions to current events and manners which it is useful and agreeable for any girl to know about.

X. Music, Drawing, and Other Arts. Arts like dancing, horseback-riding, etc., require chiefly bodily training, and need not be considered here, though they are of great value, and luckily many a girl who is dull at her

books excels without difficulty in these beautiful accomplishments. And often such a girl has some real artistic gift. When she is so happy, she has a right to devote herself to that. But no one art is essential, and if a girl has no gift she has no corresponding duty. It is so important, however, that every one should have some artistic training, that even a dull girl must not be an exception. She should try to cultivate any artistic taste of which she has even a germ. She may not have a good voice, but perhaps she can learn to sing hymns. She may never be able to draw a tree, but in trying to learn she may become able to appreciate Corot's trees.

Indeed I think the attempt to make the most of the smallest artistic gift is more necessary for dull girls than bright ones; for it is a theory of mine — borne out I believe by facts — that *the mission of dull girls who have no special mission in the world is to fill all the waste places with beauty*. A girl who cannot master botany, for instance, has all the more time to arrange flowers and cultivate a beautiful garden. How many dull women make exquisite homes because they can give their whole heart to that work! They know they can never do anything great, and so they lavish care and thought on their own little corner. If they are so unfortunate as to feel that their little corner is the whole world, their devotion to small things belittles them; but if they simply look at

it as the centre of the work they can do, it will become a haven of beauty and repose for all who pass by.

I am not an advocate of fancy-work. A life given to it is usually very poor. Yet fancy-work has its place. I know a young lady whose delicate health has prevented her from studying as her brothers and sisters have done. The only work she could do has been to beautify her own corner of the world. This she has done. She has herself a fragile loveliness which is heightened by the dainty though simple dresses which she has time to plan. She is like a beautiful old painting as she sits by the window with her soft wools and rich embroidery silks. She does not multiply tidies in a room till they bewilder the visitor, but the necessary table-covers and piano-covers and napkins and footstools have all intrinsic beauty from the patient, affectionate work of her skilful fingers. If her heart were all given to her fancy-work she would be sure to overload her rooms; but though she scarcely moves from her centre, she has an outlook on the world. She does a part of the daily household work. All the *beautiful* cooking for the family is hers. She puts the finishing touches to the attractive table. There is large hospitality in the family, and she is always sweet and fresh and ready to entertain visitors. She takes them into the garden and gathers flowers for them, or makes tea for them in the summer-house. She is not a student, but she reads the best novels. She is not a remarkable musician; but she prac-

tises some good music every day, and is always ready to play an acceptable second in a duet or an accompaniment to a song. Best of all, she has the unfailing sweetness of temper which smoothes the way of the whole household. I did not say that she was a dull girl, but she might be dull and still do all these good deeds.

A dull woman, working in her own corner, who pauses every day to get the "lift" given her by Shakspeare, who goes out of her corner every day to be refreshed by the splendour of nature, and to enter into the life and thought of people beyond her own family circle, and who welcomes her friends hospitably to the one little nook it is her province to make lovely, cannot be petty though she works with small tools.

Some one is sure to say that the minimum of education which I have set down for the dullest women does after all involve more than many a bright woman ever attains. It is so. Many a bright woman who reads incessantly does not read Shakspeare, and girls who are struggling with algebra often fail hopelessly in keeping their accounts. I have taken for granted that our dull girls are willing to study, and that they have the opportunity to do so. In that case they can accomplish more than the bright ones often do, if they are only determined to study essentials and are not allured by the wish to make a show. And they have one special advantage. If they recognize

their dulness, they are safe from self-conceit, and that is a pitfall which has destroyed many a bright girl who would otherwise have been capable of an earnest and useful life.

Character is at the foundation of all success. A dull girl with character accomplishes, not the same thing, to be sure, but something better than the bright girl whose nature is trivial.

Not one of us is shut out from the best.

XIII.

CLEVER GIRLS.

THERE are several dangers which beset clever girls. They may become self-conceited, and they may not realize their responsibilities. The same corrective may be supplied in both these cases. If you are clever, study hard subjects.

Many a brilliant girl goes on learning the rudiments of language after language, or accumulating fact after fact of history, without any definite object, simply from the unconscious vanity which makes her wish to outshine others. Yet most people can learn the rudiments of everything. Real power of mind is shown in going beyond this point. If you hope to do this however, you must first master the rudiments perfectly. A one-storey building may be useful and picturesque though its foundation is slight, but it never will do to attempt to rear a structure of twelve storeys on an insecure foundation. If you require absolute thoroughness and accuracy of yourself from the beginning of your education, you will find the task hard enough to keep you from self-conceit, for

you will not be able to learn lessons in half an hour on which other girls must spend an hour, and you will not take pride in studying a dozen branches at a time when your teachers advise you to be content with three or four. And then you will form habits which will make it possible for you to do some solid work later in life. I should be glad to have you know twenty languages if you like, or to have all the facts of history at your instant command; but a clever girl ought to feel that she has a special task set her, that she must make the most that can be made of the stuff. The world needs all our gifts. A pretty girl, chattering French and Italian at a garden party, may be quite as attractive and useful as an intellectual girl poring over the philosophy of Hegel; yet the girl who is capable of reading Hegel should not fail to do so, unless she is sure she can do something more important. Most girls cannot comprehend much of speculative philosophy. It is a study for mature minds, and those of unusual strength. But a few girls can make a beginning in this direction even in their school days. Others can set themselves the task for middle life. It is not likely that any of my readers will ever add original contributions to the subject; but the enlargement of their own minds will — if they are modest and generous — do something for the enlightenment of the world.

At all events, let the clever girls read Plato, and not only read, but study him, beginning with the Apology of

Socrates, which ought to form a part of the education of everybody, even I think of dull girls.

Logic is a branch of philosophy which a clever girl cannot afford to neglect if she wishes to train her mind for its highest uses.

Many clever girls have a love of literature, and would like to read everything that has ever been written from the cuneiform inscriptions to the last of Swinburne's poems. I admit a kindred weakness. But would it not be better for us all to make haste slowly, and read with more thought than we can give when we are in a hurry?

There are two great poems which most school-girls think beyond them, Dante's "Divine Comedy," and Goethe's "Faust." On the other hand, there are those who suppose they understand them at first reading. Girls who are omnivorous readers will do well to begin the study of these poems very early, and come back to them from year to year all their lives.

Browning is a poet that a clever girl may not neglect. She must not read him because it is the fashion, but because the message he brings to the world is so great. She may have to learn every poem by heart before she begins to see any meaning in it, but the meaning is there.

It would be idle for me to try to catalogue all the kinds of work a clever girl may do; but it is necessary that she should determine to do real work, and not be content with simply acquiring, — that is to say, she must

be willing to think. Her own tastes and abilities will decide her special line of study. And if possible, she ought to do some original work. There is however one branch of investigation I wish to call particular attention to, for it is of the deepest interest to women, and it is so difficult that only a clever woman can hope to make much headway in it. Moreover it would furnish a safeguard against a third danger which threatens gifted girls, — the danger that they will allow themselves to be so absorbed in study as to forget their fellow-creatures. This study is social science.

It is said that whereas the preponderance of elective study a few years ago at Harvard was in the direction of literature, it is now in that of political economy. Social science and political economy are two branches of the same subject, both of which are necessary; but just at present women are and possibly need to be most occupied with social science. The complexity of modern life makes it often essential that we should understand the working of far-reaching laws of economics in order that some of our very commonplace acts may do good and not harm. You remember how Dorothea in "Middlemarch" wished to learn political economy so that she might work for the poor without injuring them. A great many American girls sympathize with her. It is bitter to them to refuse a beggar on the street because the Associated Charities have warned them it is wrong to give

alms in that way. They are balked at every turn by some scientific friend who tells them they will undermine the characters of the poor and plunge the nation into distress if they follow the generous promptings of their own hearts. They feel like Mr. Howells's "Annie Kilburn," after she had tried in vain to use her money for the good of others, that it is mere impertinence to ask a tramp to saw wood before giving him a breakfast, since they have their own dinner of many courses without lifting a finger themselves.

I will risk attempting to define the spheres of political economy and social science. Even if I misunderstand the terms, it will not be of much consequence, for I shall at least make clear, I hope, just what it is that girls need to know in this department of study. Political economy seeks to benefit the whole civilized world by laying down the laws which govern the production and distribution of material wealth. Individuals must often be sacrificed to the general good. Social science, on the other hand, seeks to promote the true welfare of every individual both materially and spiritually; but in its choice between means in themselves equally worthy, it must use those which by helping one individual at a given time will not injure many more for a longer time. Such a problem was not so hard a few generations ago, when each little community was sufficient to itself, and everybody knew the needs and capacities of any one he was called upon

to help. But now when the price of grain in Chicago may cause a child to starve to death in London, the problem is one of the gravest difficulty. The most enlightened political economy is not yet competent to solve it, but it is very important that all of us should act up to the highest positive knowledge yet gained by the most powerful minds. And so it seems to me necessary that even girls should begin to study political economy. Nevertheless there is such a strong tendency among men to forget individuals while theorizing about the masses, that it is even more important for women to keep the balance by laying great stress on social science. If we are ready to help individuals whenever and wherever we can, if we are ready to enter into the lives of others and always give the best we have to give whether of money or time or thought or character, it will certainly be better than if we began to study at the other end, and never went far enough to get at the individual at all. There are those who think that loving-kindness will do everything, and it is indeed one of the most potent forces in the universe. Still, if every man and woman in Boston were alive with love to all his fellow-creatures and some railroad accident should cut off the city's supply of fresh milk for a few days, many little children would die. Loving-kindness is indeed far better than food, but what sort of loving-kindness would that be which neglected to find out the laws necessary to supply the babies with milk?

Girls then are to learn social science by working for individuals; but in order that they may work to the best purpose, they need to learn something of political economy.

This is a very difficult study, requiring a strong mind, trained judgment, and perseverance. A great many men and women cannot make anything out of it; and indeed new problems are arising constantly in these days which show that the questions we had supposed answered once for all were answered without full data, so that it is anything but an exact science. Why should a girl lose herself in its intricacies? I am forced to admit that it is beyond the range of most girls. A slight study of it is almost worse than none. It certainly is so unless the student has the rare balance of character which allows her to realize that she must see a scientific fact or theory on all sides and test it in all lights before she has a right to be sure of it. Only a girl who is intellectually modest should begin the study, and then only if she is willing to go on with it all her life.

Nevertheless, as I think there is no inherent reason why girls may not do at least as much as their brothers in this direction, — for boys, too, are stupid and one-sided, — and as women sorely need this knowledge for much of the practical work which is coming so largely into their hands, I do wish that every girl who knows that she has a strong brain, and who feels that she has

determination enough to carry on hard work for many years, would make a systematic study of political economy. I say systematic, because to study one question — the land question, for instance — by itself would be like trying to solve a problem in the sixth book of Euclid when you knew nothing about the first book. But while in geometry one step leads irresistibly to another, no one yet has produced a scheme of political economy which has no flaw in its reasoning. So, while you may go on in considerable security in geometry if you remember your results even if you forget your methods of proving each theorem, it is not so in political economy. A fallacy which you could not see at the beginning may bring you into fatal error at the end if you have not so made every step of the reasoning your own that you can recall it with ease at any moment.

Many years ago John Stuart Mill wrote what is considered by most thinkers the standard treatise on political economy. He had a powerful and logical mind; and gathered up the result of previous thinkers, and not only presented them clearly, but added much valuable matter of his own. No one of equal ability has written on the subject since; so his work is still the treatise to be completely mastered first by one who wishes to know anything in earnest of political economy.

But since his day, advancing civilization has changed the aspect of the world. He scarcely alludes to many

of the burning questions of the present time. Moreover, thoughtful critics have been able to show that there are joints even in his shining armour; so that if you were to conquer Mill and stop there, you would hardly be any better fitted for your own personal duties than you are now.

After you have mastered Mill however, you will be in a condition to attack any one of the current questions which particularly interests you. Every few years some new book appears which attracts wide attention, — such a book for instance as Henry George's "Progress and Poverty" or Bellamy's "Looking Backward." Now, whether the theories of these writers are correct or not, they have to be fully understood by any of us who hope to solve the problems of the day, because their influence is so great. Unless we ourselves understand them, we cannot deal intelligently with the mass of men and women who are their eager champions. So even if such books prove to be short-lived by reason of their errors, the student of political economy must give them serious attention; and after reading the books themselves, it is necessary to read such answers to them as are made by men of integrity and power. It may be that we have been carried away by brilliant reasoning whose fallacies were too subtile for us to discover. On the other hand it may be the answers will seem less convincing than the original argument. Or it may be they will simply clear

away the fallacies, and leave the main argument irresistible. It will never do to accept any new theory without this conscientious study, and it will seldom do to accept any without qualifications.

It will be thought I have made a very short list of books on these subjects. The actual list of those worth reading is very long, but all I can hope to do is to start a few earnest intellectual girls in a pathway which need not be retraced. I think a great deal of this solid reading is necessary as a foundation before a woman — or a man either for that matter — can be prepared to consider the economic questions discussed in the newspapers at all.

Most of us would be much helped in such study, if we could discuss every question fully with other intelligent people before we made up our minds on it. In many places there are political clubs for this purpose. I know a clear-minded woman who started one in a small country town, and it became a centre of practical thought and action for all the sensible and honest people of the region. But alas! many of us — and here I must confess I am afraid women fail oftener than men — make up our minds on a question with very little thought or study, and then get angry with everybody who does not agree with us.

XIV.

MORAL CULTURE.

THOUGH most of the previous chapters have been given to the culture of the mind, I hope I have made it clear that this can have no real value unless every intellectual question is decided by moral standards. Indeed it is difficult to speak of moral training by itself. We are to do right; but a very large number of the particular duties we ought to do depend on our mental development, and others still on our physical condition, — for which we are often responsible. We show our moral character through our bodies and our minds much oftener than we sometimes like to admit.

There are broad moral principles, however, which we must first recognize and then act upon, though we may seem to apply them to things as trivial as ventilating a room or learning an arithmetic lesson.

The three essential qualities of a moral character are right feeling, right thinking, and right doing. I am rather inclined to think that we have more power to do right than to feel aright or even to think aright, and

so I shall begin this part of my subject by a chapter on the culture of the will.

Right thinking involves good judgment. This is largely an intellectual quality; but the resolution to take the pains needed to form a good judgment belongs to the moral nature, and it is by constantly using our will in carrying out those plans which our judgment approves that we gain the poise of mind which helps us to think truly on all matters. For this reason, I shall next give a chapter to culture in justice, which I believe involves culture in truthfulness.

It is harder to reach the feelings than either the deeds or the thoughts. I mean it is a harder task to change our own feelings than either to do our duty or to decide correctly what we ought to do. Of course, if we are excitable, we may be very easily touched by the words or acts of other people, and in that case we ought to be very careful to place ourselves always among those influences which rouse our best feelings. But self-culture includes the attempt to cultivate our best feelings ourselves. In the broad sense "Love is the fulfilling of the law," so that the little I feel able to say on this branch of my subject I shall say in a chapter on the cultivation of a spirit of love.

I do not feel quite sure that all girls — even all good girls — are entirely convinced that goodness is the one

thing needful. Alma, the gifted young artist in "A Hazard of New Fortunes," exclaims impatiently in reference to the quotation "Be good, sweet child, and let who will be clever," "Just as if any girl would care about being good who had the least chance of being clever!" That is rather an extreme statement. Alma was on the whole a very good girl herself. I think it is rarely the case that a clever girl goes far wrong, — at least according to the common standards. And yet Alma did speak out the feeling of a great many bright girls who have a vague idea that in some way — just how they would find it hard to tell — their brightness is more than an equivalent for goodness. They have unconsciously the same kind of foolish vanity which makes so many handsome girls intolerable because they assume that their beauty is a sufficient contribution to the world from them, and that they need add to it neither sweetness nor brightness. But if a clever girl is not better than a stupid one, she is necessarily worse through the waste of better powers.

The founders of the first boarding-schools for girls which were established in Massachusetts, such as that of Miss Grant and Miss Lyon at Ipswich, the Wheaton Seminary at Norton, Abbot Academy at Andover, Bradford Academy, Mount Holyoke Seminary, and others, recognized the fact that the moral nature is higher than the intellectual, though they were ready to make great sacrifices for a better mental development. Such schools,

and those upon the same plan that sprang up all over the country, have always stood firm for that idea, and have scorned any system of training in which character and intellect did not go hand in hand. It must be admitted that they have sometimes held a narrow creed, and have made mistakes of judgment; but no creed is so stultifying as worldliness, and these schools have always been essentially Christian.

In some of these schools it used to be the custom, and perhaps it is so still, to send home reports not only of the scholarship of the pupils but of their conduct, promptness, care of health, care of wardrobe, care of room, and the cash account. Some of the clever girls were impatient of such oversight. If their reports for scholarship stood high they troubled themselves very little about holes in their stockings or dust in the corners of their rooms. I remember once hearing a group of girls discussing the matter. They were all bright and neat and pretty and well-intentioned girls; but some of them thought no harm was done if they saved their stockings for their mothers to mend, or if they ate candy without permission, or if they whispered to their room-mates after the bell for the lights to be put out at night. One of them, however, was of a different mind. She was the most beautiful girl of the group. I see her now as she stood among them, stately and fair, with her golden hair and deep blue eyes. She

was also one of the most intellectual of the girls, and moreover so full of life and spirit and fun that she was popular even with those of her schoolmates who could not endure "a dig." And this is what she said: "I should hate to fail in a lesson; but I should feel a great deal worse not to have a perfect mark for care of room, or wardrobe, or for any of those things."

"How can you say so, Mary?" cried a lively girl. "When the teachers are so fussy, too!"

"Why, don't you see," returned Mary, very earnestly, "I might try my best, and still fail in a lesson. I might not understand it, or I might forget. When my father and mother see my report, of course they think of that. But I can be prompt, and I can keep all the rules; so if I have low marks in my general report, they will know that I am to blame. I could not bear to send home such a report as that."

I think she was right. Perhaps the rules were too stringent, and their multiplicity may sometimes have made the girls nervous; though for that matter, if all the girls had had Mary's spirit, the rules could soon have been modified. The point, however, is this: we ought to care more for the kind of excellence which depends on our own will than for that which depends on our natural gifts, for it is the will which gives a moral quality to an act.

This is the spirit which I should like to see animating

not only every girl, but every man, woman, and child. It is akin to religion. Perhaps it is the strongest element in religion, for it is the "consecration of ourselves to the best." The feeling of dependence on the mighty Love which rules the universe, which is the blossom of the religious life, is not always within our power, and so not essential, though so precious; but the determination to hold fast to the highest we know may always be ours, and with this strong root in the soil, the plant cannot fail at last to blossom.

Universal Love does enfold us even when we are unconscious of it; and so, if we hold ourselves ready to receive it, the blessing always descends upon us at last. The opening of our hearts and minds to the best is essentially prayer, the kind of prayer which should be "without ceasing," and which is possible in the midst even of an anxious crowd. But it is so much easier to recover a high tone of mind when we are quiet and alone that those of us who are in earnest in our wish for the best life will not lightly suffer the days to go by without —

"Some part
Free for a Sabbath of the heart."

It is not always easy to find time to be alone. In the old-fashioned boarding-schools I have spoken of, it was the first thing arranged for on the programme of daily occupations, and necessarily so; for where several girls

occupied the same room, it would have been almost impossible for any of them to depend upon a moment alone if there had not been some definite portion set apart for "silent time."

A woman who orders her own household ought to remember this great need, and try to make room for it. But some of us do not have the ordering of our days. We are claimed by imperative duties from the moment we wake till we sink exhausted at night. The only quiet possible to us is inward quiet — and for that we must strive hard.

In Charlotte Brontë's story "Villette," little Paulina de Bassompierre is represented as speaking with beautiful simplicity of a letter she had received from her lover directly after breakfast. She held it in her hand a few moments, thinking it too soon "to drink that draught," for "the sparkle in the cup was too beautiful." She says: —

"Then I remembered all at once that I had not said my prayers that morning. Having heard Papa go down to breakfast a little earlier than usual, I had been afraid of keeping him waiting, and had hastened to join him as soon as dressed, thinking no harm to put off my prayers till afterwards. Some people would say I ought to have served God first and then man; but I don't think Heaven could be jealous of anything I might do for Papa. I believe I am superstitious. A voice seemed now to say that another feeling than filial affection was in question; to urge me to pray before I dared to read what I so longed to read; to deny myself

yet a moment, and remember first a great duty. I put the letter down and said my prayers, adding at the end a strong entreaty that whatever happened, I might not be tempted or led to cause Papa any sorrow, and might never, in caring for others, neglect him."

"Saying prayers" is not always a duty; but who can read Paulina's simple words without feeling that she made the true choice between active goodness and quiet communion with the Spirit of Goodness?

XV.

THE TRAINING OF THE WILL.

I DO not feel that it is my place to discuss the knotty problem of the freedom of the will. Whether we are free or not, it is always wholesome to act as if we were free. This is the doctrine not only of so great a philosopher as Kant, but the principle of every man or woman who leads a life of moral growth.

> "When duty whispers low, 'Thou must!'
> The youth replies, 'I can.'"

Every time we act upon this principle, we make it easier to act upon it again. In this way, we become constantly freer and freer to do right! We cannot always control our feelings or our thoughts or our judgments. We cannot even always do what we know we ought to do and what we try to do, for we have not always moral force enough to carry out our attempt. But if we keep on trying, we shall have more and more success. In striving for a moral victory, it is not possible to lose the battle. The battle is the victory.

Many years ago Dr. Andrew Peabody preached a baccalaureate sermon at Harvard College on this subject.

I did not hear the sermon, and do not even know his text, but I know his argument in the most practical way, through hearing it quoted again and again by a young girl on whom it made a great impression. He said that we often excused ourselves for wrong deeds and words on the ground that temptation came to us suddenly, and that we acted involuntarily before we had time to rally our forces. He admitted this as a valid excuse for those particular acts and words; but he said that the true responsibility lay further back, — that temptations were continually coming to us when we did have time to think; that if we yielded to these, we not only did wrong at once, but that we weakened the moral fibre so that we did wrong in other instances when we had no time to think; and that if we resisted the temptation when we could resist, we were forming a habit of feeling and action which would by and by help us to do right unhesitatingly and spontaneously.

So Emerson says, "The unremitting retention of simple and high sentiments in obscure duties is hardening the character to that temper which will work with honour if need be in the tumult or on the scaffold." And Carlyle quotes Goethe: "Do the duty which lies nearest thee: thy second duty will already have become clearer." And so on and so on. But it is life we need more than quotations. There is not much to be said, after all, and yet I wish I knew how to say something so

strong that it would cling to every girl's memory and insist on being obeyed.

We do not wish to be wilful; we wish to have a will so firm that it can never yield to wrong, but so firm that it yields instantly to right, — a perfectly disciplined will. It is the untrained horse that balks or that shies; but the thorough-bred horse stands still the moment his master speaks, and he turns to the right or left at the lightest touch of the bridle.

Obstinacy is the determination to have our own way; firmness is the determination to take the right way. One who has a firm will purposely gives up non-essentials in order to have more power in essentials.

In "Framley Parsonage" Trollope describes an English clergyman as making a stand against the great lady of the parish in a trifling matter. His wife begs him to yield, for she says if he gains his own way in this, he will hardly have the courage to make another stand at once, and yet that he is sure to have occasion to do so soon, and very likely in the next case a principle will be involved. But the clergyman persists, and the result is just what his wife predicted. Indeed, he is almost forced to give up a principle in the end because he would not give up a fancy in the beginning. His will was weak all through, as weak when he was headstrong and insisted on having his own way as when he was forced to give it up.

There is a kind of strong will which spends itself in controlling others. "Is Mr. —— king of this town?" asked a young man not long ago. Such a will may be cultivated, but it ends in moral degradation. In some cases, indeed, it is our duty to control others. A mother must control a child, and a teacher her scholars. There are upright men of sound intellect who know they ought to make their influence felt in public affairs. However weak and incapable we may feel, we have no right to shirk any responsibility which plainly belongs to us. We must try to do our part even if we end in failure.

But most girls at least do not have such a task set them. Their task is to train their own will sometimes to yield to others cheerfully, sometimes to do a difficult act.

One of my friends was once very ill for many weeks. At last she began to improve, and one day the doctors said she ought to get up. She was a woman of great energy and courage, but she thought it would be impossible to obey them. She was so weak and sore and racked with pain that she could only turn her face away to hide the tears. But the doctors urged the point; they told her that the disease had been checked, though she could not realize it, and that the weakness and suffering she now felt were due to the nervous strain. She understood them and believed them, but she still felt

that she could not move. She asked them to lift her up and make her walk. They told her that would do no good, for the time had come when she must use her will or she would be bedridden for life. And then she summoned all her powers, and succeeded in moving. She told me that she had never suffered such agony in her life. Yet she gradually won the victory over her nerves, and was saved from the fate which had almost overwhelmed her. I have related this anecdote to show what the will can do to control the body; but it has a moral significance. Some nervous invalids could not have done what she did, not because they were really more diseased, but because they had not previously trained their will to perfect obedience to duty. My friend had disciplined her will all her life. It was because she had accustomed her body in health to obey the light tasks set it by her reason, that she was able to command its obedience when a feather would have turned the scale against her.

Her act was the physical counterpart of what Matthew Arnold means when he says, —

> " We cannot kindle when we will
> The fire that in the heart resides,
> But tasks in hours of insight willed
> Can be in hours of gloom fulfilled."

The power of will is sometimes thought to belong only to those who are highly developed mentally; but one of

the finest instances of it I have ever seen myself was in a little boy in a school for the feeble-minded. This child was about twelve years old when he was sent to the school, and at that time he had scarcely learned to talk. He had a curious fancy for a flat-iron. It is very common for a feeble-minded child to have some such fancy, and as long as it is indulged it is almost impossible to teach him anything; so that as soon as his teacher discovered his peculiarity, she took care not to allow him to see a flat-iron. Under these circumstances, he began to learn something, though slowly and with great difficulty. It soon appeared that ignorant and deficient as he was, he was docile and ambitious. These two qualities are very rare among children like him. But from time to time he would suddenly lapse into his old dense stupidity, and no longer seem to make any effort to emerge from it. This was usually caused by the sight of a flat-iron. Even the picture of one would make him look incredibly silly. Once for several weeks he remained inaccessible to all the efforts of his teacher, until she finally discovered the reason. He had found a flat-iron, which he kept in his desk. She took it away from him, and talked seriously with him. She did make him understand that he could not improve as long as he indulged his monomania. He shed many tears, for he had a terribly sincere ambition, though its flight was not high; still, when it came to the question of giving up

the flat-iron he could not consent; he thought he would rather keep it even if he never learned anything. It was however taken away, and gradually his own interest in his pursuits returned. They were simple pursuits. He learned to build a block house, to draw the picture of a castle on the blackboard, to write his name, to string beads according to a definite pattern; he even began to learn to read. He made such steady progress that his teacher often gratified him by calling him a "big boy," — a term which he considered to convey the highest praise.

At last, however, came another relapse. The teacher searched his desk and found nothing. She frowned upon him and called him a "little boy;" but all in vain. He wept, but continued to be silly and inattentive. Just as she was almost at the end of her truly sublime patience, however, he came up to her one day, hanging his head in a shamefaced way, and put into her hands a flat-iron without a handle which he had been secretly carrying about under his jacket. "Me not little boy any more," he said, with downcast eyes. She felt that in an instant the clouds had rolled away and the victory was won. And so it proved. He never again, of his own accord, touched a flat-iron, though sometimes he saw one accidentally, and it never failed to exert the old influence upon him. Two years later, by dint of infinite pains on the part of both his teacher and himself, he had learned

to read a little in a primer; but even then he could not speak plainly. "Now, Robert," said his teacher, at the beginning of a new year, "it is time to pronounce your words clearly." Robert smiled and nodded. He stood up as he had been taught to do, placed his heels together at an angle of forty-five degrees, held up his head, threw his shoulders back, placed his book at exactly the right distance from his eyes, and was ready to begin. The teacher said afterwards that it was pathetic to see how perfectly he remembered everything she had taught him the year before, and how anxious he was to obey her to the letter. She said it humbled her to think that she was so much less eager to use her greater powers in the very best way. The first sentence in his lesson was, "The leaves are green." He could not pronounce the word "leaves;" he called it "neeves." The teacher repeated it again and again, "L-eaves." "L-eaves are neen," said the boy, with the utmost care. "G-r-een," said the teacher, pronouncing the first letters phonetically. "G-r-een," said the boy, patiently. They went on so for a few minutes, when the teacher noticed that the child seemed to breathe with difficulty. "You need not read any more if you are tired," she said; but the boy signified his desire to go on. He held himself erect, he did not falter, but she saw a dark and then an ashen look come over his earnest face. "Robert," she said, "you are too tired to read; we will leave the lesson till to-morrow."

But before it was time for the next day's lesson Robert was dead. He was dying when he had raised his head so erect, and had followed every tone of his teacher's voice so faithfully. It was simply by the power of his will that he had been able to go on.

I have told Robert's story at length because it seems to me to show clearly what can be done by a will set to do the right. I think that Robert in his short life did a great work which most of us never accomplish fully, even with our greater gifts and advantages. He disciplined his will so that it did not fail him even at the extreme moment.

Let me suggest some points in his story which may otherwise be overlooked. At first, he was really incapable of controlling himself. He did not know that a flat-iron did him any harm. Even when he did know it, he had not the moral power to give it up; but when he was placed under the right training, and the flat-iron was taken away, he used all the little power he had in obeying his teacher and in learning the tasks set him. In this way he gained new power, till at last he had so increased his strength that he was able to make what was to him the supreme sacrifice. After that, all was easy. There was no longer any hindrance. His mental powers were no better than before. He could never advance very far, but he advanced steadily. There was never again a moment of halting.

His teacher afterwards taught brighter pupils. "It is

very hard for me to respect my scholars sometimes," she said. "When I see how willing they are to waste their powers, and how satisfied to do only half their duties, I think of Robert. If he had been gifted as they are, he would have been a great man, a blessing to the world. But after all," she added, "I ought not to judge the children harshly. The difference between the bright and the dull is not so great as we think. I suppose these children cling to some pet habit which dwarfs their powers, just as Robert clung to his flat-iron, and it is not so easy for a teacher to find out what it is and take it away."

We all need outside help. A part of the training of our will is to put ourselves under the control of those we know will insist on our doing right when we have not the strength do it ourselves. We ought to seek out the people who rouse our best aspirations, and to surround ourselves with those objects which nourish our highest moods. By and by we shall learn to do without them if we must.

And there is, I believe, infinite help for all of us. If our whole soul is set on the right, we shall be so in harmony with the universe that everything — sorrow as well as joy — will help us to do right.

Let us begin, if we have not already begun, to cultivate our will so that we shall be serene in the midst either of happy excitement or of annoyance, courageous when we see a hard duty before us, and active in doing our duty.

XVI.

JUSTICE AND TRUTH.

THE best girls are prone to be unjust. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that injustice is the besetting sin of the majority of good girls. Girls whose aspirations are the highest, whose wills are so disciplined that they do not hesitate a moment before any hard duty, who are full of love to God and man, fail here. This is partly because their feelings are strong, and mislead them; but I believe the great difficulty is that they have not learned to think.

The mental training that forms the judgment is thus of direct moral value. I have no doubt that every one would admit that a thoroughly educated woman is usually a just woman, and a warm-hearted woman who has learned how to be just is the very flower of womanhood. A girl who has been taught accomplishments merely, though she may be very charming and lovable, often lacks the deep foundations on which a noble character must be reared.

I have already given a chapter to the intellectual side of the question, and have suggested some of the means of learning to think.

Now one great reason why we must learn to think is that we may be just. A girl may wonder what good it can do her to detect a fallacy in geometry, or to make a correct translation of a Latin poem, or to weigh the evidence for and against a scientific theory or a historical fact; but every exercise of this kind helps to form such a habit of just thought that it will probably become harder and harder for her to join in careless gossip about an acquaintance. She will not be likely to condemn anybody easily on hearsay, but will always wish first to hear the other side.

Fortunately for the dull girls, who find geometry and Latin and science beyond them, these are not the only subjects that train us to think justly. The most stupid girl can make a moral stand when she hears a bit of scandal. She may insist on suspending her judgment till she knows the truth.

To think justly we must strive to know the whole truth about a subject; to act justly we need only know that part of the truth which would influence our action.

Mr. Clapp, the Shakspeare critic, says in one of his inspiring lectures on Macbeth that women in an emergency shut their eyes and act, refusing to see the truth; while men keep their eyes open, but set their teeth and

go on. Now, if we shut our eyes merely because we are not brave enough to do wrong without pretending it is right, we are abject creatures; but if we shut them because we are determined that a sight of the danger shall not keep us from doing right, we hold ourselves to the highest justice. Our path, perhaps, is a narrow one between two precipices. We know there is a terrible abyss on each side. But there is no mistake about the path. Let us not weaken our powers by looking down at the horrors below, but fix our eyes on the sunlit summit to which the pathway leads. Many a girl finds her lot cast in a family where some member outrages all her sense of right. She fears perhaps even more than she knows. It would seldom be her duty to watch for facts to confirm her suspicions. Let her believe the best she possibly can about the wayward one, and love and cherish and honour all the good she sees, and if she is not self-righteous, she will be pretty sure to find a great deal of good even in one she must often condemn. Judgment here is not her duty. The only care she need have is not to lower her own standard. She has her own good life to lead, and it will not help her to think about the faults of anybody else. Moreover the less she thinks about these, the more likely she will be to help in amending them.

Take these lines of Mrs. Browning to illustrate my meaning: —

"She never found fault with you, never implied
Your wrong by her right; and yet men at her side
Grew nobler, girls purer, as through the whole town
The children were gladder that pulled at her gown.
My Kate!"

The mother of a family, however, must be willing to open her eyes to the faults of her children, because the knowledge will influence her in training them.

Or suppose a girl has to decide the question of marriage. It will not do for her to ignore her lover's faults. Suppose she suspects he drinks, or is dishonest in business, or leads an impure life, she would do very wrong to marry him without satisfying herself on these points. Even if she decides to marry him after her eyes are open, her attitude toward him must always be different in consequence of her knowledge. She can no longer hope that the two can develop side by side; and though her deliberate object may be to raise her husband to her own level, she must always anxiously guard herself from falling to his.

I hope this makes my meaning clear in saying that "to act justly we need only know that part of the truth which would influence our action." If a girl fears that her father drinks, he is still her father, to be treated with all the love and honour she can give him; but if her lover drinks, her chances of saving him are greater before marriage than after. Knowledge in this case changes her duty.

Justice and truth are two sides of the same virtue. I do not believe that any of my readers ever intentionally tell a lie. I know that some girls do so, but they are not the girls who are interested in self-culture. Still, most of us are not perfectly truthful. Let us not deceive ourselves by thinking that we are, for then we shall never give ourselves the chance to improve.

We have different temptations, and they do not assail us in the form we have prepared for; accordingly, we yield before we quite know what we are doing. Is there one among us all who does not blush to think of something she has done which she had not thought it possible for her to do? Even those of us who have reached middle age and who have striven all our lives to resist temptation seldom can look back many weeks without feeling ashamed of some insincere deed or word.

I once knew a high-minded girl of good intellect who was too ambitious. Her geometry teacher put a great strain upon her pupils by giving them a book to study which contained full proofs of the propositions, but forbidding them to read a word beyond the statements. It required special care to look at the figure and not see something more. "Oh, dear," sighed one of the class, "when we say the Lord's prayer in concert in the morning, and come to the passage 'Lead us not into temptation,' I always think of the geometry lesson." Well, this temptation was too much for our heroine. She could

not always prove the propositions for herself, and she could not bear to admit that she could not. She was a truthful girl, but after working herself nervous over a difficult theorem, she did sometimes let her eye wander down the page till she saw some enlightening reference. She tried to still her conscience by saying to herself that she did not really read the proof. So she won honours in her examination and went triumphantly on her course. But her heart was sore. Time passed on. She was about to graduate, and she could look back on four years of as fine work as had been done by any girl in school. At last, however, she could bear her trouble no longer. She went to her teacher and told the whole truth, feeling that if she were publicly expelled from the class, it would be better than to live with her fault unacknowledged. The punishment given her was that in the stress and hurry of commencement preparations she was obliged to take a wholly new geometry and work through every proposition in it for herself. To get the time for this, she had to relinquish her part in the commencement programme.

I think such a confession showed strong moral power. I tell this story for two reasons, — to suggest that he "who thinketh he standeth" still has need to "take heed lest he fall," and that when we clearly admit that we have done wrong, we may —

"rise on stepping-stones
Of [our] dead selves to higher things."

If this young school-girl had said to herself, "I did not tell a lie, I never do tell lies, I dare say other girls in the class looked at the proofs," and had so excused herself, she would have done what many of us do; and by refusing to own that there was a blemish on the whiteness of her beautiful character, she would have become incapable of washing away the stain. She might have forgotten her fault and have enjoyed her class reunions and the cordial welcome which her teachers gave her when she revisited her Alma Mater; but who would not choose the suffering for the sake of her victory?

I think all ambitious girls have a kindred temptation, though I do not mean that it often presents itself in just this form. But some of you are silently aware, if you are honest with yourselves, that you like to appear a little wiser, a little more learned, than you really are.

We all conceal our defects of all kinds as much as we can, and we have a right to do this. It would be an injury to others as well as ourselves if we went about proclaiming our shortcomings. It is not a very good plan to talk much about ourselves even to our dearest friends. But there is a faint line dividing the reserve of self-control which leads us to try quietly to correct our faults instead of talking about them, and the reserve we practise for the sake of making others believe we are better than we are. No one but ourselves can decide where this line lies; but if we aspire

to be truthful, we must take heed that we never go beyond it.

Another temptation to untruthfulness which besets many women comes from the desire to attract others. This is strongest in some of the loveliest characters, for a gracious woman who has tact can so easily say something very sweet, yet not altogether untrue, which flatters her hearer, and reacts in making the speaker beloved and admired. Tact is a dangerous gift. Here, too, the dividing line between right and wrong is very faint. Bluntness is not necessarily truthful any more than flattery is. Every large-hearted, loving woman does really see a thousand good and delightful qualities in those about her which the careless pass by unheeded. Her deep sympathy, too, often shows her that the need for recognition is very real to many, indeed to most of us, however firmly we may seem to stand alone, and she longs to give it.

> "Hast thou . . .
> . . . loved so well a high behaviour
> In man or maid that thou from speech refrained?"

Those who live in this spirit are noble men and women. I often think of the words of a friend, "The best people are those we should n't be willing to let hear us praise them." And yet most of us cannot be our best without the warm nourishment of some genuine praise. Now, when the time comes for a woman — or a girl — to speak

an appreciative word to one in need, how shall she be sure to say just enough and not too much? For one thing, she must be careful to tell the truth; and for another thing, she must keep her own longing for an appreciative word in return sternly in the background. Love begets love and appreciation appreciation; but anything like a mutual admiration society is nauseating, and any interview which seems likely to end in that way must come to a peremptory close.

Sometimes our heart so overflows with love and admiration of another that we cannot help speaking. It is not that the one to whom we speak needs our words, but that our gratitude for the blessing which comes to us out of the fulness of the life of our friend must have relief in expression. It is right for us to speak. But how doubly wrong it would be for us ever to simulate such a feeling! How wrong to exaggerate the germs of such a feeling!

In questions of truth, there is danger of losing sight of moral perspective, to use a phrase of Dr. James Freeman Clarke. I remember a young lady who was so morbidly conscientious in the matter of speaking the truth that one night when a sick friend with whom she was watching asked her what time it was, she could not be contented till she had consulted several clocks, as well as her own watch, which she feared was not quite right, and then she said hesitatingly, "It is about five — no,

six — minutes past twelve!" Of course she wearied and annoyed the invalid, and though she was a truthful young lady, I do not think she was necessarily thoroughly truthful in feeling and action. I believe the chances are against her. No one can distort the conscience like that and still keep the balance which perfect justice requires.

It is not the girls who exaggerate absurdly in their picturesque conversation who really misrepresent the truth, but those who lay on just enough of the false colouring to make us suppose that the colours are true. When Sam Weller talks about "double million magnifying glasses of hextra power," we do not feel any need of correcting his language in the interests of truth, even though we may hold the opinion that hyperbole is a figure of speech which must enter sparingly into elegant diction.

Perhaps I have said too much of our temptations to falsehood and not much to help a girl to cultivate truthfulness. Of course it is first necessary to understand our aim, and then if our will is disciplined, we shall be able to move steadily in the right direction. But I will make one or two suggestions. First, let us avoid temptation as far as we can. If a girl is tempted to look into her book while reciting a lesson, she must leave it in her desk. If she knows that her kind words to her friends are usually overkind it would be a good plan to avoid all personal conversation for a while.

Second, we can often help others in a negative way by avoiding embarrassing questions. All of us have affairs and even opinions which we have a perfect right to conceal; but if anybody asks us a direct question about them, we are often in a cruel dilemma. We cannot tell a lie, and we cannot tell the truth. If we show any hesitation or say boldly that we do not wish to answer, that is often in itself a complete answer. A truthful woman — that is one who is truthful all the way through — loves truth in others as well as in herself, and she can often give efficient aid to her friends by abstaining from a question she wishes to ask. If it is about some delicate matter which she thinks her friend wishes encouragement to confide to her she can easily make it clear that she would be glad of the confidence without putting a direct question.

These suggestions are slight; but the girls who are determined to be thoroughly truthful will have no difficulty in making others for themselves, and each one probably knows her own needs best.

XVII.

A SPIRIT OF LOVE.

NOTHING is so great as love. We must have a loving spirit. But how can we make ourselves love anybody; and who cares for forced love? I cannot give much help here, but if I withheld the little I can give, I should feel that the rest of my words were as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

"Mamma says I must be sincere," said a fine young girl, "and when I ask her whether I shall say to certain people, 'Good-morning, I am not very glad to see you,' she says, 'My dear, you must be glad to see them, and then there will be no trouble.'"

One thing is sure. We must realize that the spirit of love is essential to us, or we shall spend our strength on things not essential. I once knew a child who had no mark for absence or tardiness during a whole year at school. The energy and perseverance she showed in earning such a record are praiseworthy. But there was one day in the year when her brother was to set out on a long and dangerous journey. There was reason to

think he might never come back. The child was full of grief at the parting, and yet she believed she ought to give up the last precious hours with him and go to school. It was heroic, but did she not put a false emphasis on punctuality? She did not understand that love is greater than punctuality. Every other day in the year she had been right, but this day I believe she was wrong.

When we once realize the need of a loving heart, what can we do to nourish it? At least we must learn to be unselfish. As long as we think of ourselves and act for ourselves, love cannot have a luxuriant growth in us. Unselfishness is the key to this whole subject, and we learn it not from books, but by living.

I remember a young lady who died long ago whose heart seemed to overflow with love to everybody in the world. Yet she had two or three strong antipathies; she did not indulge herself in these, but set herself at work to overcome them. She was a teacher, and among her scholars was a young girl so wanting in tact that she made herself disagreeable to everybody. The teacher owned that she could hardly bear to speak to her even in the class; but when she had owned it, she became aware that she was wrong, and she determined to change her feeling. She began by making a distinct effort every day to do some kindness to her pupil. She would not shrink from her any longer, but took special pains to meet her and talk with her. Much sooner than she had expected

she found herself really caring for her *protégée*. The girl had many good traits, though they did not appear on the surface; but as soon as the teacher began to know her, they were evident. Of course the pupil became more passionately attached to her teacher than to any one else in the world, so that as a reward of her kindness the teacher was forced to be more kind, for the pupil followed her footsteps everywhere. Yet the teacher did not flinch. She even took the girl's cold, clammy hand —which she had once said, with a shudder, made her feel as if she had grasped a fish — in her own warm one, and seemed glad to give something of her own vitality to the forlorn young creature.

I do not know whether such a victory would be possible to all of us even if we had the courage and patience to fight with our prejudices so bravely. This teacher was deeply religious. She had a positive belief in the power of God to lift us above ourselves, and she definitely prayed for help in her struggle. She did really win, for she truly loved the girl who had so repelled her.

This is the strongest case of the kind that ever came to my personal knowledge. I think most of us are contented to drift along with our prejudices, and that we hardly try to conquer them. But if we could once be roused to believe that we ought to fight this battle and that we must win it, I am inclined to think that we could. There is —

"The possible angel that underlies
The passing phase of the meanest thing."

It is probably true that everybody has some good and lovable traits of character. At all events did any one ever sincerely try to find something good in another without succeeding? It is the "possible angel" we must look for, and there is probably no way of finding it so quickly as by active kindness.

We need also to be kind in word and thought. All gossip about others' faults is unprofitable. Among the ignorant, it shows a vacant mind. There is even a worse form of it among the intellectual, — that of saying witty things of the foibles of our neighbors. Everybody has faults; but it is seldom indeed that it is necessary to mention them, and it would be humiliating if we had nothing better to think about. The habit of saying and thinking the best that is true of all our acquaintances would change our attitude toward the world. Who of us does not fail here?

But who cares to be loved from a sense of duty? It is very well to try to love other people, but do we want them to try to love us? If we resent that, it is all the more necessary for us to be so lovable that nobody can help loving us.

What is it to be lovable?

I know a handsome, healthy boy who plays foot-ball with a will, swims like a fish, and rides like an Indian. I

have never known him to come into a room which he did not brighten by his presence. His radiant smile seems to kindle an answering flash on every countenance. His clear laugh puts everybody in good spirits; he likes to do kind acts; he is always preparing some delightful surprise for somebody; he is at leisure when his mother wants an errand done, and thinks it only fun to run a mile for a spool of thread; he is absolutely without self-consciousness; he is lovable, and everybody adores him. Here health and vigour supplement an unselfish heart. The moral I draw from him is that if we wish to be lovable, we should first be unselfish, and second, do our best to be well. We shall not all succeed in being as charming as he is; but we may have a degree of success, and at least we shall make others happier, whether we win their regard or not.

I know a lovable young girl who is very poor. She is upright and industrious and sensitive; but she is also so loving and grateful that everybody likes to help her. The most commonplace kindness makes her beam with delight. She loves everybody and thinks everybody is actuated by the noblest motives. She wishes she could help others. As a matter of fact, she always gives more than she receives, though her gifts are intangible, and neither she nor her friends recognize them as gifts. But she clears the atmosphere wherever she goes. Haughty young women who snub half their associates unbend to

her. It is so impossible for her to conceive that any one can be capable of snubbing her, that she gives a warm greeting to these stately belles, and they thaw before they have time to remember their dignity. I do not mean that she ever forces herself upon anybody. She is peculiarly thoughtful in such ways; but when she does meet any one, her instincts are so generous and noble that she does not stop for the moment of suspicion which wrecks so many good but self-conscious girls, before her glorious smile shines out and her eager voice speaks a welcome. If she had a million dollars she would greet a poor girl in that way, and she simply cannot conceive that all the girls who have a million do not feel as she does.

The vitality of her temperament no doubt adds to her charm. If her blood were more sluggish, she might pause for the one fatal moment, and after she had seen the cool face before her clearly it would be too late to smile. And yet these proud young girls who are contributing to her education (and feel themselves much puffed up by their charitable deeds) love the sweetness of that smile, and go away glowing with the sense of their own graciousness. They are glad that she makes them so gracious, and they love her. Well, we cannot make our own temperament; but if we sometimes remembered what it is to be lovable, we might occasionally find out the way. If we cannot do this, we must not resent the

endeavours of other people to love us from a sense of duty. But need we resent them? Do we not really wish that others would look for the good in us instead of magnifying the bad? After all, I do not believe we are likely to quarrel with any one who tries to cultivate the spirit of love, even if the effort has to be directed toward ourselves. We should object no doubt to any condescension; but those who are sincerely trying to be large-hearted have not much time to think of their own superiority, and so they cannot condescend.

At all events, we can love others, and that is even better than to be loved by them, though we do not believe it. Even in the case of the love between men and women, the same thing is true, though it is not my duty to speak of it. There is nothing finer in all George Eliot's novels than what she says of Will Ladislaw's love for Dorothea. His supreme happiness came from the perception that here was a creature worthy of being perfectly loved. I think if girls always kept that standard of love before them, there would be fewer silly love-affairs, and fewer miserable marriages. Perhaps there would be fewer marriages of any kind, but those that did take place would bring a deeper happiness.

Do we love even those we love best with full measure? We depend on them, and enjoy them, and cannot endure their loss; but all that may fall short of love. It is possible to cling very closely to our friend in a weak and

selfish way. It is an overflowing heart which gives as freely as it takes.

Can we not enter more completely into the lives of those dear to us? Can we not prune our own selfish fancies so that instead of demanding everything from our friends, we may give without stint to them?

There is a peril in an intellectual life. It is easy to be so absorbed in study that we forget to live. Educated women are more just than the ignorant, and, on the whole, they love quite as well, though more wisely. Indeed, I remember once hearing a thoughtful woman say, "I have noticed that none of the intellectual women I know are as famous as they promised to be, and the reason is that they always sacrifice their intellect to their family."

In spite of this verdict, some of us must be conscious that even when we are ready to make sacrifices on a large scale, we do allow ourselves to be so occupied with books and thought that we have no space to expand with a warm, fresh life, which would be a far greater blessing to our friends than many of our weary sacrifices. We easily wear out in the search for knowledge, and even in trying to do our duty our strength fails us; but there is a quickening principle in love which restores our powers.

It takes time to love. It is true that love is not bounded by time. Our hearts may be swelling with love while we are doing the most trivial things. The little

girl, to whom time seems unlimited, who begs to make a pudding to surprise papa at dinner, is alive with love to her very finger-tips even while she is beating the eggs and mixing the butter and sugar; and the young lady who is taking lessons at the cooking-school to fit herself to add comfort to the life of the young man she has just become engaged to, will work over her recipes with an ardour which transfigures them to poems. No doubt there is many an overburdened mother, who has not a minute to herself from sunrise to sunset, whose drudgery is happiness, because it is a means of expression of the love within her for those who are to wear the clothes she makes and to live in the rooms she sweeps. Whenever we are doing mechanical work, even when it is not done for those we love, our thoughts are free, and we may give them to our friends, though it is not true that all hand-workers do thus employ themselves. But with intellectual work it is different. To study, we must not only be alone and silent, but we must be absorbed in what we are doing. Even if the aim of our work is the good of others, we cannot think of them while we are doing it; and if we work hard, we become more and more involved in our studies and perhaps less and less able to shake off their yoke.

There was once a woman who had occasion to support several invalid relatives. She loved them, but their personal care did not fall upon her. She could however

earn a large salary as a teacher, and she cheerfully devoted this to their needs. But she could not hold her fine position without arduous study. Every moment was crowded. One day she was on her way to take a lesson from a distinguished professor when a dirty little boy begged for some money to buy food. She shook her head hastily and hurried on. There were several reasons for doing this: the authorities of the city had earnestly requested that no alms should be given on the street; she was in a great hurry, and it would have delayed her to investigate the story and see that the child was placed under proper care; and her purse was almost empty. When she had gone about a block farther, she suddenly stopped. It flashed across her mind that the boy might really be suffering; that it might have been in her power not only to help him at the moment, but to find out something about him, and so place him where his whole life might be the better in consequence. She knew how improbable all this was, still it was possible, and she felt that the responsibility was hers. She looked back, but the boy had disappeared. She thought that she ought not to have refused such an appeal from a child mechanically. If he were an impostor at that age, it was all the more necessary that some one should look after him; if not, poor as she was, she could spare a few cents for him. Her time was more precious even than her money; but she could have stopped five minutes, and

if she had still been in doubt as to his truthfulness, she could have bought some rolls for him and superintended his eating them. She bitterly regretted that absorption in her own thoughts had led her to form the habit of doing mechanically what she should have done intelligently, though the pressure in her life came almost wholly from her acknowledgment of the claims of others.

She told me that she had little fear for the boy. She thought she should have refused the money in the end; but she could not get over the shock of finding that callous spot in her character.

When we are absorbed in thought petty interruptions are almost unendurable, and none of us can be too careful not to disturb others in this way; but every time we suffer ourselves to give way to irritation when we are interrupted, it is an admission that thought is more to us than life, and that intellect is more than love. I do not mean, of course, that we should allow many interruptions from children and others whom it is our duty to train in habits of thoughtfulness; but that where we have no such duty or right, there can hardly be better discipline for us than the constant remembrance that nothing we are trying to learn can be worth quite so much as the power to enter sweetly into the little needs and wishes of others.

The distribution of our time has a more far-reaching influence in cultivating the spirit of love than we at first think. No one who is free to choose should plan to fill the whole day with rigid occupations. There are few who can afford five hours of solid study. Yet some are so placed that they usually have that time to spare, and they may fall into the habit of employing it in study. In such a case, it would be a good plan to arrange regular work for four hours, and then lay aside some interesting book that could be snatched up at odd moments to be read in the remaining hour. Then if a whole hour should be wasted in interruptions, the main work of each day would go on easily. So, if we usually have an hour to study we may make the last quarter of it elastic.

We want plenty of time for the larger interruptions of life, to have real conversation with our real friends as well as a pleasant word for a new acquaintance, to write letters that tell something of what we are thinking to those we used to love but who are drifting away from us because life presses so on all sides. Those who can choose must never let their friends go even when the margin of choice is narrow. A woman who earns her living has a struggle to decide whether she will give her little leisure to study or to her friends. If some of her friends will study with her, it may be the solution of the question, though the best study requires silence and solitude; and she need not make many new friends.

But if she takes all her leisure for study her heart will wither within her.

When I say that we must be generous in giving our time to others if we ever hope that love in us may grow to be a vigorous plant, I do not mean that we should give time to gossip. I know sisters and friends who spend most of their time together in reading aloud to save themselves from talking over other people *ad nauseam*. It is as bad to give too much time to our friends as too little. Interchange of thought and experience and life is good; but when the conversation begins to grow weak, it is time for silence, and perhaps it is time to be alone. In the distribution of time, one reason that we must give a part of it to mental culture is that we may have something to say worth saying when the time comes to speak.

There can never be fine culture of any kind while we are in a hurry. We have a right to be busy — indeed if we are strong and well, every moment of our day may be filled to the brim; but for that very reason, because we wish to enjoy the full richness of every moment, we cannot afford to hurry over it to the next.

Quiet and leisure to think over and enjoy our books, our music, and our pictures is necessary before they really become part of ourselves. Unless our culture is thoroughly assimilated, it is not culture at all. It is a good thing to

look at the sky once a day if we can do no more, but we want whole days in the open air, when we feel —

> "Oh, what have I to do with time?
> For this the day was made."

But hurry soils the heart even more than the intellect. We may win a fact for use even when pushing along post-haste; but if we love our friends, we must be willing to linger over the thought of them, and we certainly ought not to be too busy to be glad to see them.

Sympathy is an essential part of love. I have long thought that true sympathy was an intellectual quality. The very best of sympathy is perhaps independent of the intellect, for a child or even an animal may show that it suffers with you, simply because it loves you. But while we welcome the sympathy of a child who cannot understand our trouble, most of us are irritated by the incompetent pity of older people who ought to comprehend our position, but who get no further than to be sorry for our suffering whether we are right or wrong. I know that some of the most sympathetic people are far from being learned, — indeed there is always danger that learning will choke the growth of sympathy; but it is by using the powers of thought, memory, and imagination in entering into the trials and problems of other people that we are finally able to put ourselves in their places and feel intelligently for them. Then, as we are

not blinded by personal feeling, we may often see the right course more clearly than our suffering friend, and be able to give the wise and firm support needed at this crisis.

Intellectual sympathy with all about her, it seems to me, is one of the highest aims a girl who desires self-culture can set before herself. Here is a worthy object to occupy the strongest mind. It is when an intellectual girl spends herself on lower studies altogether that she becomes a pedant.

Sympathy with all about her, I have said. Can we love everybody? Do we not weaken ourselves in the attempt to love everybody? Can there be any enthusiasm in love that is divided among so many people? Can we love anybody very rapturously when we love so many? In answer, I will say that among the women I know — and I dare say the same is true of men — those who have shown the most intense love for a few friends are also those who have given the largest measure of generous affection to everybody they have come in contact with, from the servant in the kitchen to the fellow-traveller of a day whom they are never to see again.

Dante tells us again and again that love is the one thing that is inexhaustible. The more we love the more we can love. The more that we are loved, the more we can love in return, for "he that loveth is born of God," and has a part in what is infinite.

XVIII.

THE CHOICE OF COMPANIONS.

IT is fatal to growth to confine ourselves to one set of companions, even if they are good and intellectual and refined. The world is large, and no one circle absorbs all the goodness and intellect and refinement within the reach of its members, if they are only willing to step sometimes beyond its boundary. A new standpoint shows us new virtues even in our particular friends. But the worst effect of exclusiveness is that at last we come to believe that our centre is the centre of the universe. The exclusive spirit does not belong to aristocrats alone. I wonder if there is one among us so free from it as to be qualified to cast the first stone. The Boston servants who cannot think of taking a situation except on the Back Bay usually require more credentials from a new acquaintance than their mistresses do. We all know plenty of religious people who will have nothing to do with the worldly, plenty of intellectual people who take pride in avoiding society, and farmers who look down upon the city boarders quite as much as the city boarders look down upon them.

Nevertheless, the choice of our companions has an overwhelming effect on our culture, and especially with those of us who are more influenced by persons than by books.

For instance, none of us can afford to mingle with coarse people until our own refinement is assured. When we reach that point, the coarseness will repel us; but we may be able to see good and attractive traits in coarse people, and while our superior refinement may help them, their goodness may help us still more.

With little children, it is right to take great care that they should have only the best companions. Until they have judgment enough to decide what is good and what is bad in those about them, it is dangerous for them to come in contact with the bad at all; though on the other hand, if they are kept entirely apart from others, they can hardly be saved from selfishness, — which is worse than the vices they escape. A mother often has to choose between two evils for her child; but at least she should always make sure that its care is given only to a good and trustworthy person.

When a girl is old enough to choose her own friends, how shall she choose? She is generally guided by her likes and dislikes. She says with the girl in the ballad, —

> "The reason why I cannot tell;
> I only know and know full well,
> I do not like you, Dr. Fell."

I have never been able to find fault with this principle, though I hope most girls are not drawn together, as some are, simply because their sleeves are cut alike. Even if we all looked about and selected the most suitable person we know for a companion, and decided to love her best, do you think we should succeed? The fact that we are attracted by one rather than another does usually mean that that one in some way belongs to us.

The better we are ourselves, the more likely we are to love the good. But then, suppose we are not very good, and we are conscious that our friends hinder instead of help us? What are we to do if we are aware that we are very easily led by those about us? This is a hard question, but one which every girl must answer.

I do not believe any girl is so unfortunate as not to find that there is at least one among her friends who helps her. Let her cling to that one, if to no other. Or if there is one among them whom she knows she helps, she must be sure to cling to that one.

But what can be done about the friends that hinder? Isn't it rather selfish, just for the sake of our own improvement, to cast off those who love us? That is the way many generous girls feel, though they may not like to say so to their parents or their teachers, who beg them to be more careful of their associates.

It would be a fine thing if we could determine not to be hindered; if instead of that, we could help the friend who is now hindering us. Sometimes that is possible. Suppose we have already chosen our friend and cannot give her up, even if we want to do so, without causing her pain. We are in no such dilemma about books. We can give up the trash we have been reading without hurting anybody. We can fortify ourselves with the best of companions in books. As we improve, if there is anything genuine in our friendship, our friend will perhaps improve with us. If she does not, the bond between us will grow weaker and gradually disappear of itself.

But alas! there are many very weak girls who have not decision enough to try such a remedy. They would be good girls if they had good friends; but with silly companions they are very silly girls. I fear there is no help for such except in obeying their wiser guardians. Any girl who is conscious that one of her friends is leading her to do wrong or to have wrong thoughts, and who knows she is not strong enough to lead instead of being led, must humbly give up her companion. Suppose she hurts her friend's feelings. It may rouse the one who is hurt as nothing else could do.

Occasionally two girls at boarding-school who know they are too weak to help each other will talk the matter over and petition not to be allowed to room together, but to be put with wiser room-mates. In the end they love

each other all the better for the change which helps both of them to be better worth loving.

But we do not by any means have complete choice in the matter of companions. We cannot escape association with a great many people whom we do not even fancy. For this reason I feel like insisting all the more on what I have said before, — that we must use all our strength to rise above ourselves without the help of others. We must be our best whether those about us are their best or not. Perhaps we can help them up; at all events we must not let them drag us down. If we are not first self-reliant, I am afraid we shall never be fit to choose any companion. And we ought to choose, in spite of all I have said about our right to be guided by our natural likings; and the more difficult it is to escape from most of our associates, the more important it is to choose well where we have any choice.

The one law is to choose the best. But who are the best, — those who minister to us or those to whom we can minister?

I know a woman who has always chosen well. She has friends in all parts of the world and in all grades of society. If I tell you something about them perhaps it will make the whole subject clearer.

When she was a school-girl she was naturally attracted to two or three of the best girls in her class, — one was the best scholar, another the most high-minded, and

another, though dull enough, was the neatest and sweetest of them all. She cared also for two of the teachers, — one the oldest and wisest, the other the youngest and freshest of the corps. She had two or three friends also among the little girls whom she was able to help. She was on good terms with almost everybody in school, and never failed in courtesy and kindness; but she did not make sudden or intimate friendships. She talked freely perhaps to one of the girls and to one of the teachers. When she left school and went back to her home in the city, she was at once surrounded by a large class of cultivated people. She liked society, and went to parties when she had time; but the special friends she chose for herself were not those who shone most in such assemblies. One, to be sure, was a brilliant society woman, the most accomplished and most beautifully dressed woman of the circle, who could dance all night and be as fresh as a rose in the morning, and whose wit and grace never failed. Our heroine admired this woman as she admired all things perfect of their kind; but she never would have made a friend of her if she had not seen in her a large, full, unselfish nature, lifted above trivialities, even when she was doing the most trivial things.

Another of her friends was a woman then studying medicine, who afterwards became a physician with a world-wide reputation; another was a young society fellow whose dominant interest in life was music;

another was a rich young lady who held the opinion that a woman should support herself, and went daily to her work in a counting-room.

In the meantime her interest in those outside her circle was increasing. She had a few lessons in German from a shy old professor very much out at the elbows, who had such a power of inspiring her with high thoughts that he became her life-long friend. She found that her milliner was a cultivated woman, who when she went to Paris, studied the pictures of the Louvre as much as she did the fashions, and she made a friend of her. The newsboy who delivered papers at the door proved to have a real taste for the drama. She gave him substantial help in his education; but more than that, she was his sympathetic friend, and in reading Shakspeare with him she received as much help as she gave.

She boarded one summer in a fisherman's home on one of those lonely islands along the coast of Maine, and she found the fisherman's wife a true companion, a woman not only of sweetness and integrity, but a thinker without books, and one who saw and felt the glory of the world without requiring an artist to point it out to her.

At the South she came in contact with a negro woman who had been a slave, and whose life had been full of those terrible tragedies of which the simplest account makes the blood run cold. This woman by force of

character had won peace out of suffering, and had something to give to others well worth giving.

In Austria my friend met a charming woman in a railway train, and the two proved to have so many points of character and thought in common, that they formed a permanent friendship. This new acquaintance turned out to be a countess.

In Italy my friend found a young girl in a wretched hovel, among ignorant peasants, who showed such natural powers that it seemed worth while to educate her. My friend said she had never known greater refinement of feeling or truer poise of character in any lady of the land.

Now why did this one woman discover these remarkable people everywhere? The rest of us go through the world and think our companions very commonplace. It was because she had those qualities in herself that called out a response from the best in others.

> "The pedigree of honey
> Does not concern the bee.
> A clover any time to him
> Is aristocracy."

She was a quiet, rather reserved woman, though she had an easy grace in conversation which always pleased. She cared deeply for beauty and delicacy, but she was absolutely unworldly. Nothing attracted her which was not genuine, and she had a nature large enough to

perceive what was genuine even when it wore an uncouth disguise.

We ought to choose the best companions. But is it not clear that even the weakest girl cannot shield herself from responsibility by saying she is too easily led by those she loves? We can never choose our friends aright until we ourselves become worthy of worthy friends. Our friends do help us; but we have no right to require it of them, and no right to be a drag upon them. We must learn to help ourselves, and then we can in turn help others, and be fit to receive help from them.

The lady I have been describing used to say, "The happiest friendships are not those where we take everything or give everything, but where we both give and take."

XIX.

THE MEANING OF OUR CULTURE TO OTHERS.

HALF a century ago, the girls working in the Lowell mills gave one of the finest examples ever seen of "plain living and high thinking." At present a girl who had to work in a factory from twelve years old to twenty would feel herself defrauded of culture. But these Lowell girls show them how little depends on circumstances and how much on themselves. One of these girls wore out Watts's "Improvement of the Mind" by carrying it about in her working-dress pocket; others studied German in the evening, though their hours of labour were from daylight till half past seven at night; they held Improvement Circles, and published a magazine or two. They were high-minded and refined, not afraid of drudgery, but determined to make their way to something beyond it. Many of them loved beauty and appreciated the sweep of the fair blue Merrimac under the factory windows. In their homes, with all the frugality, the atmosphere was fragrant with peace and integrity.

No material help that can be given to a girl forced to

do hard work can equal such an example. Most of these factory girls succeeded in their hopes. They earned their education; they became teachers, writers, artists; they often married men of wealth and standing, and many of them now hold important positions in society. Other women may give time and strength and money to support a working-girls' club; but these women can give something far better. The girls only need to look at them to see what working-girls may become, and they no longer feel that they have any right to despair because their conditions are hard.

Miss Lucy Larcom, in her exquisite "New England Girlhood," by describing her own life in the Lowell mills has made every reader feel how far-reaching is all genuine culture, though perhaps she did this unconsciously. Her frankness in speaking of this life puts work on a true and dignified basis, and furnishes an ideal that must help every girl who can be helped by anything.

I remember a delightful young teacher in a boarding-school who had a love for beauty that was like a sixth sense. It seemed as if every girl in school caught some glow of the heavenly flame from her, though she simply went her way unconscious of her influence. One morning she looked out of her third-story window and saw the world wrapped in snow. The storm had ceased, but the paths were yet unbroken. She thought of the beauty of the woods that encircled the town, and it seemed to

her necessary that everybody should see it. She said so to the principal of the school when they met at breakfast, and suggested that lessons should be given up for the morning. The principal smiled thoughtfully. It had not occurred to her that the lessons could be given up; but she was a woman of large mind, and she saw at once that a sleigh-ride through those wonderful forest aisles would do more to elevate the girls than anything they could learn from books. A lovely pale light was breaking through the clouds and touching the arches of the elms as the happy party set off. There was plenty of fun during the morning, and yet this penetrating into the beautiful mystery of the untouched sanctuary of the snow was as a consecration to these light-hearted girls. They came home quietly, and studied faithfully through the short winter afternoon. And they never forgot the vision. I do not suppose that the teacher had any thought of doing good. She acted from the impulse of a nature so in harmony with beauty that she felt instinctively that the moment had come to look beyond books at a revelation of the divine. Yet it would hardly be too much to say that every girl in school was more sensitive to beauty all her life for what many people would have considered that unreasonable holiday. We must indeed try to help others directly, and yet the best help of all always comes to them not from what we do or say but from what we are.

"How will you endure life in that stupid little place?" asked one young lady about to graduate from college of a classmate whose family ties made it necessary for her to settle down in a small village; "you will not have one companion of your own age." "Oh," said the other, serenely, "I have plenty of old friends there, and it would be a pity if my education was of no use to them. I mean to start a reading-circle, and a natural history club, and a class for art study, and one thing and another."

"In other words, you mean to teach your acquaintances," said her friend, rather scornfully.

"I 'll teach them what I can," replied the other, cheerfully. "Of course I ought to do that, after having had a chance to learn; but you don't realize how bright those young people are! If we read Shakspeare together, for instance, I shall know most of what the critics think, but I dare say they will make more original suggestions than I shall."

"Then you don't mean to do missionary work, after all."

"No, indeed; but I don't mean to rust out. I want to enjoy myself and I want to go on with my education; and that is what the others want, too, though they have not been so fortunate as I have. We shall help each other."

It seems to me that this young lady was more generous

than if she had definitely proposed to do missionary work among her uncultivated friends, for she was more humble and less self-conscious. No one can doubt that her companions themselves would approve of her spirit, or that she would accomplish more than if she had looked down upon them from a height.

If we rise, we must take others with us, instead of shaking ourselves loose from them. Otherwise there can be no real elevation of character. Even intellectually the contact with minds differently trained from our own is an advantage. We discover what is real and what is merely traditional in our culture.

In America, at least, there are always to be found two or three people in every country town far more highly cultivated than the rest. It is sometimes rather hard for them to overlook the differences between themselves and those around them. They are shocked at the want of refinement they see everywhere. They are tired of village gossip. So they sigh for more congenial society. Now, while it is true that a friend or two of their own degree of culture would be a means of great happiness and refreshment to them, it is not true that their lives may not be full of interest and inspiration. The people talk gossip because nothing else is provided for them to talk about. Surely an educated woman ought to be clever enough to introduce some higher subject of conversation which would not

be beyond the range of the company. If the young graduate I have quoted carried out her plans, it is easy to see that in her circle at least there would be new topics for discussion, and every member of every one of her clubs ought to be a new centre for healthful development. Twenty families might easily get an impulse from her unpretending resolution not to rust out.

As for refinement, that grows gradually by contact with the refined. Now, suppose all the refined people could shut themselves up in a beautiful garden hidden from the rest of the world by a high fence, would it show that they loved refinement, or simply that they loved themselves? If they really loved refinement, I think they would not be satisfied without scattering its seeds far and wide.

So it is with the things of the intellect. What is their charm for us? Ought it not to be the delight of constantly finding out more and more of truth and beauty? If it is so then how can we be contented without showing the vision to everybody who is willing to look at it? If we alone have climbed to the hilltop whence we may see the rising sun, how strange that we should waste a moment in regretting that we are alone when we might be cheerfully calling to those groping in the darkness below to come up to us! Suppose we should stand on the summit, and instead of fixing our eyes on the sunrise, should look down in scorn on our old companions

at the base of the mountain. Suppose we spent our time in admiring our own strength and swiftness, and began to be jealous the moment we saw a fellow-traveller approaching! What would the sunrise be to us? It is not those who love the things of the intellect who fail to love their neighbour, — it is those who love themselves.

In these days when we have so many opportunities to take a broad glance at the world, when we are oppressed and overwhelmed at the thought of the poverty and misery of so many of our fellow-creatures, most educated girls long to do something to raise the poor and ignorant. They are ready, if need be, to live in the midst of the slums in the hope of giving cheer to the suffering, and of furnishing an ideal to the low. This is well. But all cannot do the same work. Many a girl feels herself stranded for a time at least among merely commonplace people. Every one who cultivates herself finds herself raised above some of her old associates. This is as true of the rich as of the poor. Such a girl fancies she has nothing in common with those about her, and that she can do nothing for them. Both fancies are false. Probably her great opportunity has come to her, and she does not see it. If she were not so certain of her superiority to her companions, and would meet them simply, giving them her best, or at least the best they would take, she would soon see they were not so commonplace as she had thought, and they would find themselves lifted above

their ordinary plane. Generally it will be found that everybody is ready for our best, however they may slight and deride our second best.

Our culture has a meaning to our dear friends, to those whom we regard as our equals and most delightful companions, and to those whom we love and reverence as far above us. The touch of a friendly hand often holds us on a high level when if our friend wavered, we should sink with her. Often two girls find great enjoyment in pursuing grand studies together when either alone would drift with the current and fritter away the day in trivialities. You can all think of some friend, no wiser in books than you are, who has helped you unspeakably by her fine ideals. And do you not also know some one you count inferior — perhaps some child — who has forced you to be your best by loving what is best in you? Then you can see how you too may help those you honour.

Self-culture is not selfish. It is a duty and it is a well-spring of happiness within the heart. One who has true culture is a radiant point from which beams of light flow out, shedding a blessing on the world.

THE END.

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